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WALKERS Snacks

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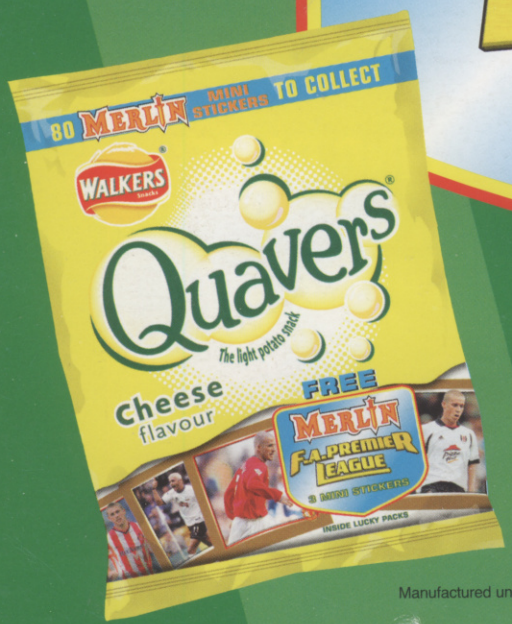
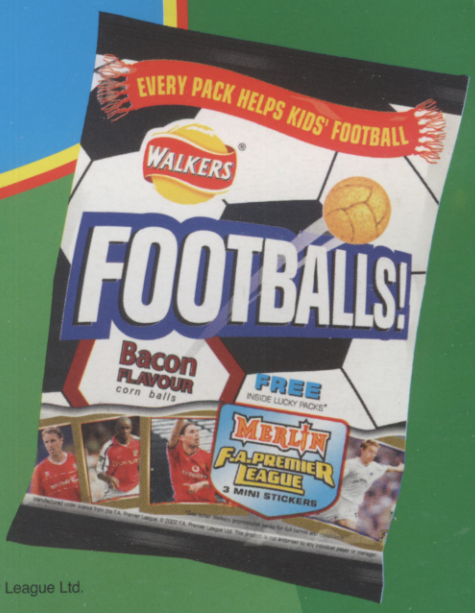


Available in packs of Walkers Snacks



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IS THE ONLY MAG YOU NEED

We want to give you the best. Why? Well you deserve it, because you love games just as much as we do and want to know what's getting our gaming pulse going every month.

And nobody treats you better than CVG. We won't fob you off with a handful of ropy screenshots, pretending that we've played a game, because when we say we've played a game, we REALLY HAVE played it! Take Medal Of Honor Frontline on PS2 this month. CVG is the ONLY mag to have played through the game, to experience first-hand the game's adrenalin-fuelled action in all its glory. To prove it, we've taken loads of screenshots that you WON'T FIND ANYWHERE ELSE.

And that's just one of the reasons why CVG always puts you guys first. There's also this lot...

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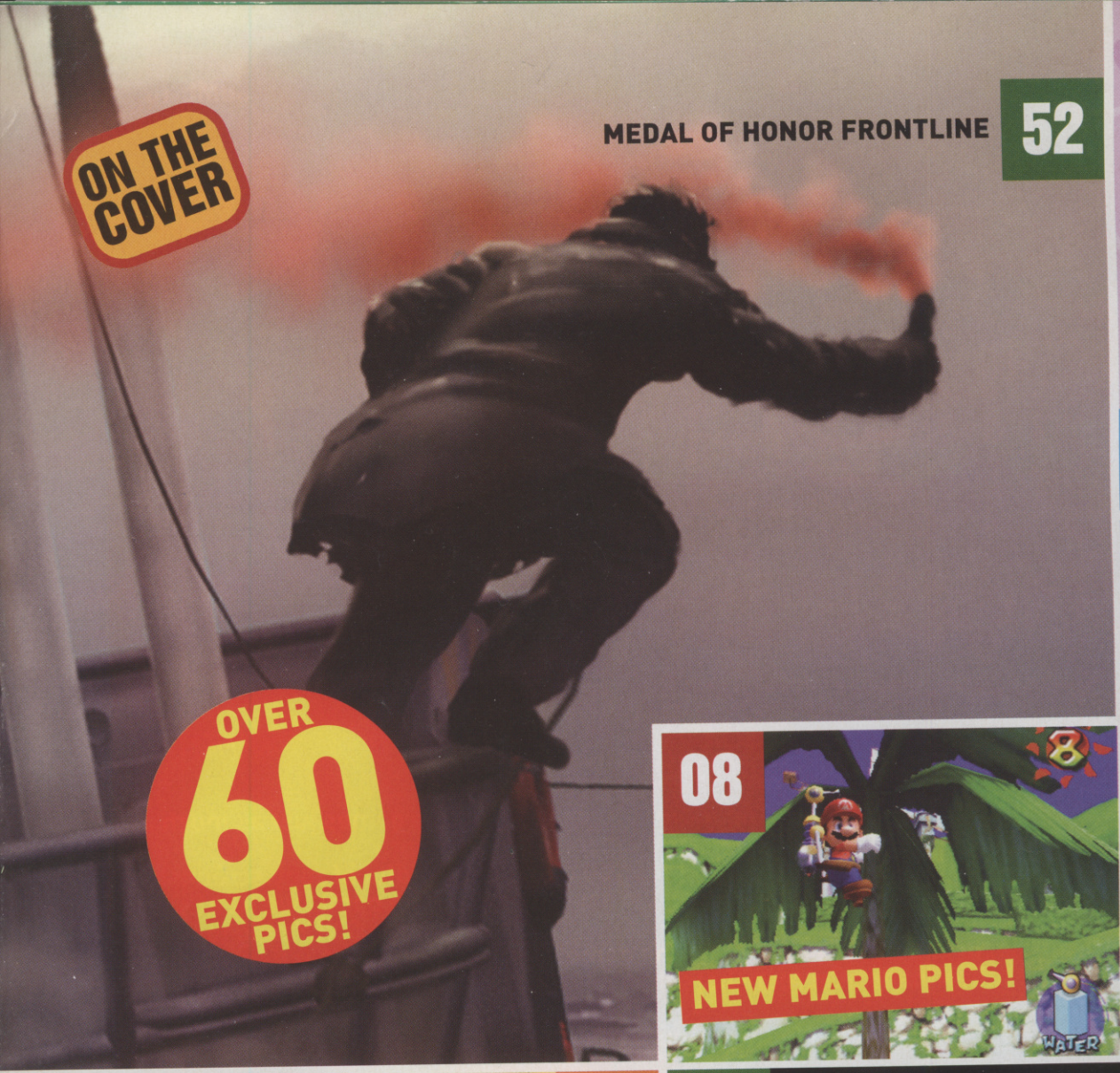

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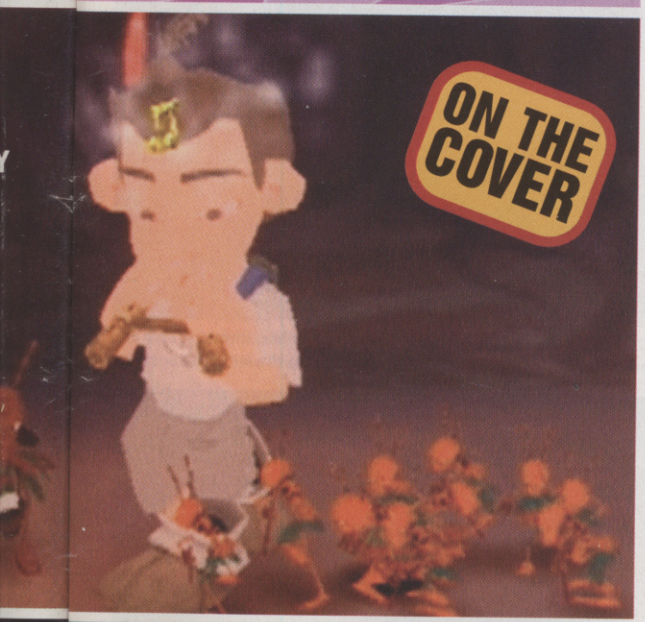
HERDY GERDY



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PLANET CVG

THE HOTTEST GAMES & GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

ANOTHER CVG EXCLUSIVE

World Cup Pic Debut

FIFA TAKES ANOTHER SHOT AT GOAL

Extra time, and it's 1-1 between England and Argentina, but we've got a free kick from 30 yards. Becks steps up, hammers the ball, hooks it around the wall and lands a screamer in the top-left corner. Earthquakes begin all across Britain as England fans leap in the air and land in unison. See, 2002 is the year England WILL win the World Cup, and EA's latest FIFA game is going to enable you to predict then replay history over and over again till your thumbs get cramp and your eyes shrivel up into little raisins.

FIFA World Cup 2002 on PS2, Xbox, GC and PC will be set loose on British shores on April 26, just over a month before the first match of the real World Cup kicks off between France and Senegal on May 31.

With loads of new gameplay features like 'Air Play', which sees players pulling off high-speed ball juggling acrobatics, FIFA fans should be beating their balls against the nearest wall in frenzied anticipation. But till then feast your peepers on these awesome exclusive screens. See it first with CVG!

FIFA World Cup 2002 will be the first footie game to arrive on Microsoft's giant console when it ships to the UK this spring

The in-game visuals are 100% typical FIFA: crisp, slick and boasting brilliant player likenesses

OFFICIAL EVENT IN LONDON

UK PlayStation Festival In May

Sony is staging its first UK PlayStation Festival on May 4, 5 and 6 this year, taking place in Gunnersbury Park, West London.

But wait: this UK bash will be a lifestyle event featuring urban sports, music and movies in addition to the games. Meaning BMX and skateboarding demonstrations, street artists and break dance crews to distract you from Final Fantasy XI. There's even going to be a giant-size cinema screen showing director's cuts of movies, interspersed with pop promos and... documentaries? Maybe stuff like how Gran Turismo was made. Could be cool. Sony says that it will preview major PS2 games at the event too.

It costs £18 per day to get in, but enter one of the competitions and you could win the cash back. At CVG we just want to see how the UK performs in the Games Challenge Arena – get practising your mad skillz for that. To book tickets, phone 0115 934 8757. And check out www.2ctheofficialplaystationevent.com.

Sony Enlists Metal Gear 2 To Sell PS2

SOLID CHOICE FOR FIRST-TIME PS2 PUNTERS

On March 22 a new PlayStation 2 bundle-pack goes on sale, with Konami's Metal Gear Solid 2 as the big draw.

Since the world first clapped eyes on the game, MGS2 has been synonymous with PlayStation 2. Now Sony Computer Entertainment Europe has acknowledged this with a new bundle pack, available throughout all PAL territories. Only 350,000 of this special pack will be produced, and we do mean 'only' because MGS2 has already broken all records, with retail pre-orders at 1.5 million. This puts it in a different league to the likes of Gran Turismo 3 even. Basically if you're after a PS2 MGS2 boxset, don't take your time getting there!

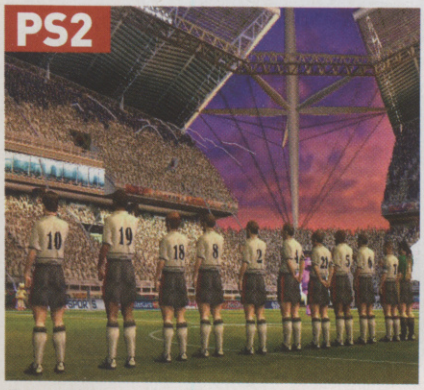
GAMECUBE

The GameCube version is looking hotter than Kelly Brook wearing a clingfilm dress in a sauna. This follow-up to FIFA 2002 is set to feature a whole load of dramatic new camera angles and replays too

PC

All the latest global team line-ups are here in full force in true EA tradition, so you'll be able to play through the whole tournament against the actual players who are going to appear in the real World Cup

PS2



England win the World Cup and Seaman shows off the gold to the crowd. But by the looks of the giant flag in the background it couldn't have been too tough a game. The US in the World Cup final? Get real

FIRST PICS AND INFO

Pokemon Coming To GBA

A fifth Pokemon movie, a new TV series and the first Game Boy Advance adventure are heading our way. The movie's Japanese title is Mizu No Miyako No Mamorigami, which translates as 'Protection Gods Of The Water Capital' – many of the locations are based on the famously soggy city of Venice. Two new 'Protection God' Pokemon are Latias and Latios. The big blue one is Latios (2m, 60kg), brother of kid sister Latias (1.4m, 40kg). As for the Game Boy Advance adventure, the game's producer Tsune Ishihara has promised 350 variations to capture and train. There aren't enough hours in the day! If you want to look at more next generation Pokemon, visit this website: www.pokemon2002.jp.

SONY ANNOUNCES ONLINE PLANS

Let's Go Online!

Sony reckons online gaming on your PS2 will be launched by April this year.

At a press conference in Japan, the company unveiled PlayStation BB, a service allowing users to access the net, use email plus other cool stuff like watching movies through RealPlayer and downloading MP3s.

In addition, special software will soon be available, enabling PlayStation BB users to download and play PSone and PS2 games.

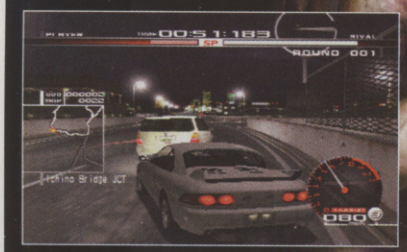
Prices will be 1500 yen (£7.50) per month for Internet services, while downloading games will cost either a one-off charge of 18,000 yen (£95) or 18 monthly instalments of 1160 yen (£6).

Sony also released a list of titles from third-party developers expected to take advantage of online facilities. They are:

ARIKA:
The Dungeon Of Doruaga
ATLUS:
Untitled RPG
CAPCOM:
Auto Modellista, Resident Evil Online (working title)

Auto Modellista online. That is just too cool

FROM SOFTWARE
Armored Core Sigma
GENKI
Tokyo Xtreme Racing Online



Race gamers from around the globe

HUDSON
Bomberman Online (working title)
KOEI
Nobunaga's Ambition Online (working title)
KONAMI
Untitled music game, untitled sports game
NAMCO
Untitled action-adventure game

NEWS SHORTS

Capcom has announced an online Resident Evil game that's going to be on PS2 first with other formats to follow when the consoles get broadband Internet access sorted.

Konami has sold 4.5 million copies of MGS2, and that doesn't include the 1.5 million they have shipped to Europe, which will no doubt sell out.

THQ is taking a break from wrestling games with its newest Xbox title. Yager is a 3D flight 'n' fight sim which will appear on PC as well and will be the same game, but with a multiplayer mode added.

Harry Potter fever prepares to strike again. The second book, Chamber of Secrets, is the next to get the PSone and PS2 treatment by EA.

Take Two has announced that it will be porting PS2 racer Smuggler's Run 2 to GameCube – come on guys, give us GTA3 as well.

Nintendo's sales blitz has taken hold. They have shifted almost three million GameCubes in the US and Japan, and almost five million GBAs.

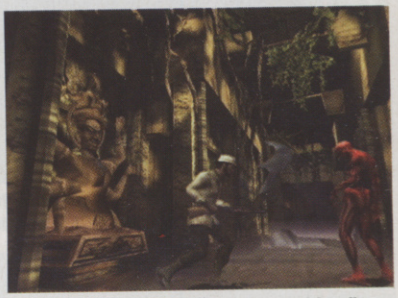
The sale of violent videogames is under threat in the American state of Georgia, where laws are being drafted to ban them.

Cube On Full Beam

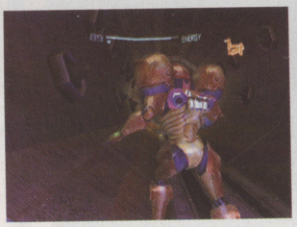
These stunning new GameCube screens arrived just in time for printing! They were released as part of a special European Tour by Nintendo's top creative mind Shigeru Miyamoto. Love the pics? Read the CVG.com interview then! www.computerandvideogames.com/news/news_story.php?id=25604

We reckon you have to use the C-stick to balance here

The thing on Mario's back is a water rifle



Eternal Darkness: "I'll get me skin..."



Metroid's third-person mode

Weird aliens in Metroid Prime

Bet Star Fox plays like Zelda

"Higher? Lower?"

GameCube prices are currently going up and down like a yo-yo, with nobody quite sure what the UK cost will be.

Last month, a press release from Amazon.co.uk quoted a price of £149.99, but – at the time of writing – Amazon's now quoting £164.99. And retailer Gameplay quotes the 'Cube at £169.99, whereas it had previously indicated a £155 price point.

The problem is that Nintendo set its price at 249 Euros, which is roughly £152. However, the Euro can wobble around a bit, and retailers need to make sure they don't under-price the machine. CEX, Dixons, Currys, Electronic Boutique and others were – at the time of writing – holding off on quoting a price.

Meanwhile, Nintendo ordered The Computer Exchange, London, to remove imported 'Cubes from its shelves. CEX has been selling the machine for around £350, but the final straw seems to have come when CEX started flogging 'pre-modded' GameCubes which could play US and Japanese games.

CVG STRAW POLL

What do WE think..?

This month: How do we feel about Nintendo banning sales of import GameCubes?

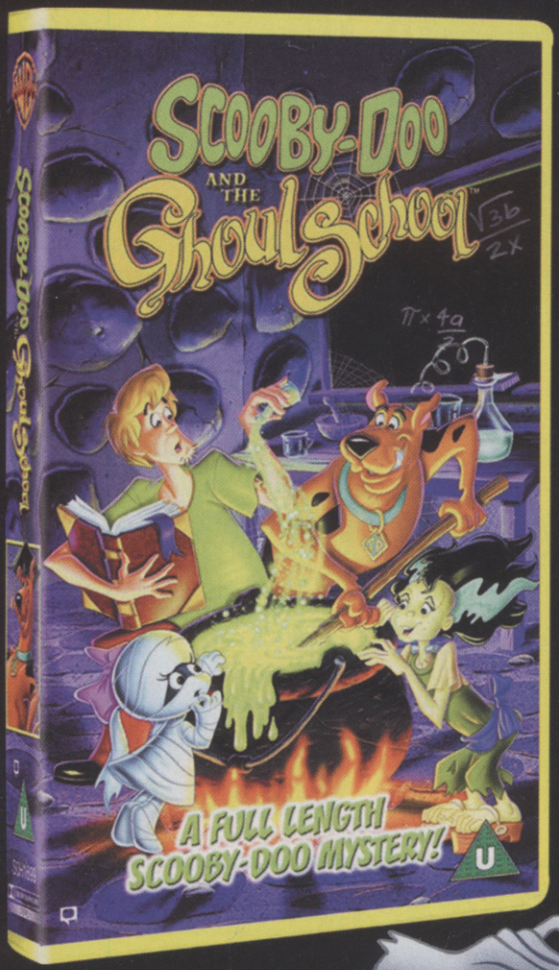
Alex: Import machines don't really harm Nintendo. Only the hardcore buy them anyway.

Lee: If Nintendo think it's the right thing, then it's the right thing. They have to protect their interests. [Creep!]

Les: It's a crock. All the best stuff gets to the US first!

Allan (work experience guy): If people want to pay extra, then why not?

It's Scooby-Dooby-Doo in his latest mystery!



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"Is It A Bird? Is It A Game?"

HUNDREDS OF SUPERHERO GAMES COMING! (WELL, FOUR)

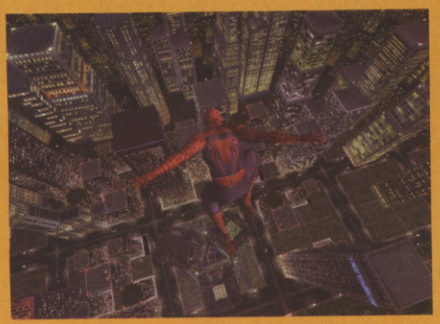
"Holy wheelchair access, Batman! The evil Doctor Game-O-Vid has unleashed FOUR new superhero games into the atmosphere." "Never fear, Robin, CVG will tell all..."

He's a nosey Parker

SPIDER-MAN THE MOVIE

Wow. If looks are anything to go by (and they must be – how else do you explain the popularity of Naomi Campbell?) then Spider-Man The Movie is shaping up to be a real beauty.

Based on the upcoming film – obviously – Spider-Man The Movie is a third-person action adventure title due out on PS2, GameCube, Xbox, GBA and PC in the spring. Gameplay details are thin on the ground, but who needs them when you've got shots as good as these?



Feel Spidey's next-gen power! Awesome!

BATMAN VENGEANCE

Xboxers will be overjoyed to learn that a version of Batman Vengeance is coming to the machine in the next month. Ubi Studios promises cleaner, improved textures and a smoother frame-rate, as well as extra Bat gadgets.

SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS

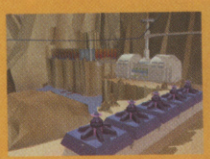
There isn't tons of stuff to show you for the forthcoming Superman PS2 game, called

The Xbox version should be tweaked to perfection

Unleash your special 'girl bash' move, Bats!

Superman: Shadow Of Apokolips. We've only got these level shots and some pics of the cast, but at least you can see that the game, out autumn, will be heavily based on the excellent TV series. We also know that it will feature 15 massive levels and the gameplay will be in a variety of formats, from all-out combat to stealth-based stuff.

Superman. Yesterday

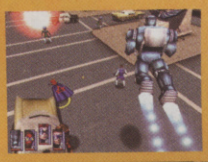


A level. Today

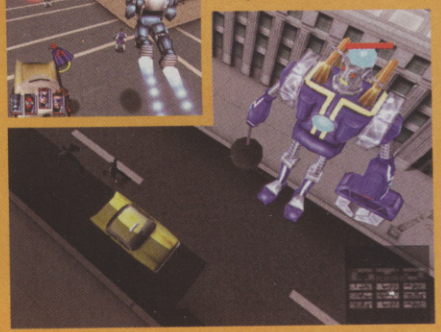
FREEDOM FORCE

Freedom Force is the odd one out here – cos it's the only PC title, and its superheroes have been created especially for the game. Couldn't afford the licence, boys? Ha! Only joking.

Anyway, PC players can form, train and lead a team of heroes to go up against the evil Lord Dominion. Team-based action with a soupcon of RPG then? Cool! Expect it in May.



Graphics: basic



They're not real superheroes, you know...

SUPERHEROES – NO!

Some bad, bad superhero games

BATMAN AND ROBIN

Acclaim's tie-in to the skanky film was a lifeless mix of driving, fighting and 'sleuthing'. Thanks, but if we want to 'sleuth' we'll get some 'Lithterine'.

FANTASTIC FOUR

The Fantastic Four roamed the streets, beating people up. There was the occasional flaming car, but otherwise it was a black eternal nothingness claiming you as its next victim. AAARRGH!

INCREDIBLE HULK PANTHEON SAGA

Just like the Fantastic Four it made you want to gnaw off your own toes and spit feet meat at the TV screen.

Spot The Dan

See if you can find Dan's head hidden in the mag. There's a rare CVG t-shirt in it for the first email answer out of the hat. C'mon, now, how hard can it be?

Ish 244: Dan was in Hitman 2. Figures

NAMCO HEADS FOR THE SLOPES

Alpine Racer 3 Looking SSXY

Namco sure knows how to glam it up!

Looks like Namco was impressed with EA's SSX games, because this update of Alpine Racer bears more than a passing resemblance. Though it's also true that SSX learned a few tricks from Alpine Racer, so we guess this makes it even.

The PS2 version of Alpine Racer 3 goes on sale in Japan this month, with additional features to the arcade original – most notably a split-screen two-player mode, and the choice of snowboard or skis. It's certainly spectacular-looking. Also, don't you just love these characters! We'll have a full report soon.

GUNS AND BUNS RULE ON XBOX

Kill goons for unlocking orbs

Stunning effects leave us moist

Faint at the special attack visuals

March Of The Valkyrie

Guns are great. Girls are better. Put the two together with some saucy Sega love syrup and a whole load of green Xbox power and you get a small idea of just how cool Gun Valkyrie on Xbox should be.

Crusty gamers will remember the marvellous Panzer Dragoon on Saturn and Gun Valkyrie plays a lot like that classic, but this time you're mostly on foot. Full preview next issue. We can't wait!

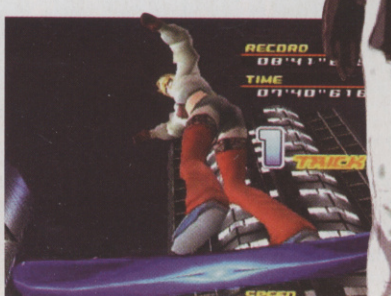
Beautiful, ain't it? Yum yum

Plenty to gawp at, but watch the aliens

Born to 'board baby, yeah!

Jump, stunt, turn... okay, I get it

SSX rules the snowboarding scene, but this looks like the first serious challenge


Snowboarding in lingerie and cut-off jackets. This could be the future of sport

NEWS SHORTS

Japanese gamers are to get their very own clone of Sega's classic Get Bass, in Real Bass Fishing: Top Angler for the PS2. Get yourself down to the import shop if you wanna catch fish on your PS2.

The next round is definitely on Capcom. Onimusha has now shipped a massive two million units, which breaks down to 1.1 million in Japan, 620,000 in North America and 290,000 in Europe. Meanwhile Onimusha 2 is due out soon in Japan.

Still in Japan, arcade reports show that Japanese gamers prefer Virtua Fighter 4 to its nearest rival, Tekken 4, with both significantly outperforming Capcom Vs SNK 2 and The King Of Fighters 2001. However, all the fighters are being blown out of the water by the multiplayer horse racing sim, Derby Owner Club 2001!

Forthcoming Xbox title Transworld Surf knows no bounds when it comes to trying to capture that 'extreme sports' feel. Having already roped in Australian surfwear label Billabong, the game's also linked up with surfers including Taj Burrow, who said: "I heard some grommets talking about it the other day and they said it's crazy!" Arse.

SUPERHEROES, ALPINE RACER 3, SPOT THE DAN, GUN VALKYRIE, NEWS SHORTS

NEWS SHORTS

Games are being confirmed for the GameCube thick and fast now, and one of the most recent is Top Gun: Combat Zones, which has been slated for a June release. This will also make it the first combat title to find its way onto the 'Cube. The game's already out on the PlayStation 2 and it's distinctly average, but thankfully the usual tweaks have been promised for its GameCube incarnation.

The third instalment of Megarace – that's Megarace 3 to you – will be released on the PC and PlayStation 2 simultaneously later this month. The game boasts no fewer than 33 circuits and eight worlds which you can fly your midget racer around. Apart from being tiny, the other main difference is that you actually take off this time. Er, cool.

Policemen over in Italy have been attempting to place a ban on the game Mafia, which was released there at the end of last month. In the PC game, players get to try to climb the ladder of their local mob. This has angered the president of the country's police anti-mafia section, Roberto Centaro, who said: "This is a proper instruction book for wannabe mafiosi." The game is released here later this month, so you can see what the fuss is about.

MORE COLIN MCRAE SHOTS!

Mc-Raising The Stakes

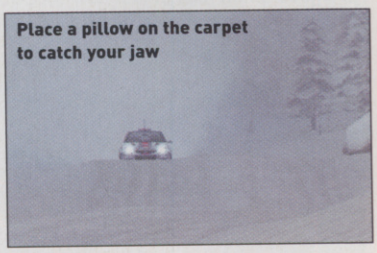
Here we have some new screenshots for Colin McRae Rally 3, and everything suggests that this game is going to rock like no other rally game EVER!

Just look at the shots, ferchrissakes! They're gorgeous. On top of that, Codemasters promises extra elements to the Colin games that you'll have never experienced before. It's not just about racing grimy cars across treacherous terrains – that's only half the story. Instead, this game aims to capture the whole experience of actually BEING Colin, *without* having to locate a secret door leading into the back of his head. You'll need to progress through the championship, as well as build up a relationship with your co-driver, Nicky Grist.

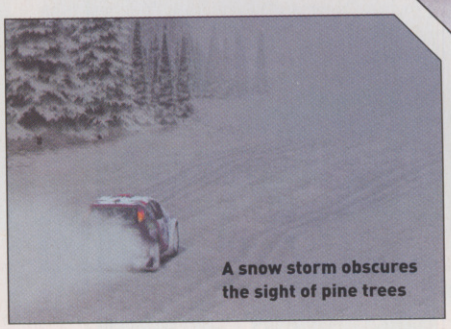
"This is all about personal involvement in a championship," says Guy Wilday of Codemasters, his voice shaking with the emotion of the moment. "No one's done anything like this with a rally game before." Sheesh, Ma, fetch us some cold water – Uncle Brewster's fainted with the excitement.

The game's released for Xbox, PS2 and PC in the Autumn; meanwhile, Colin McRae 2.0 for the Game Boy Advance is out in June.

Okay, we reckon it's replay footage, but it's mint



Place a pillow on the carpet to catch your jaw



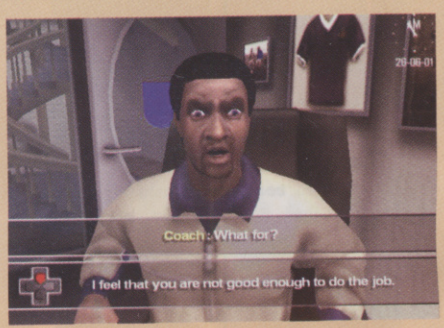
A snow storm obscures the sight of pine trees

Much of Colin McRae Rally 3 is set on the moon

Press The Flesh

NEW PREMIER MANAGER PICS FOR PS2

In this bit you get treated like a twerp...

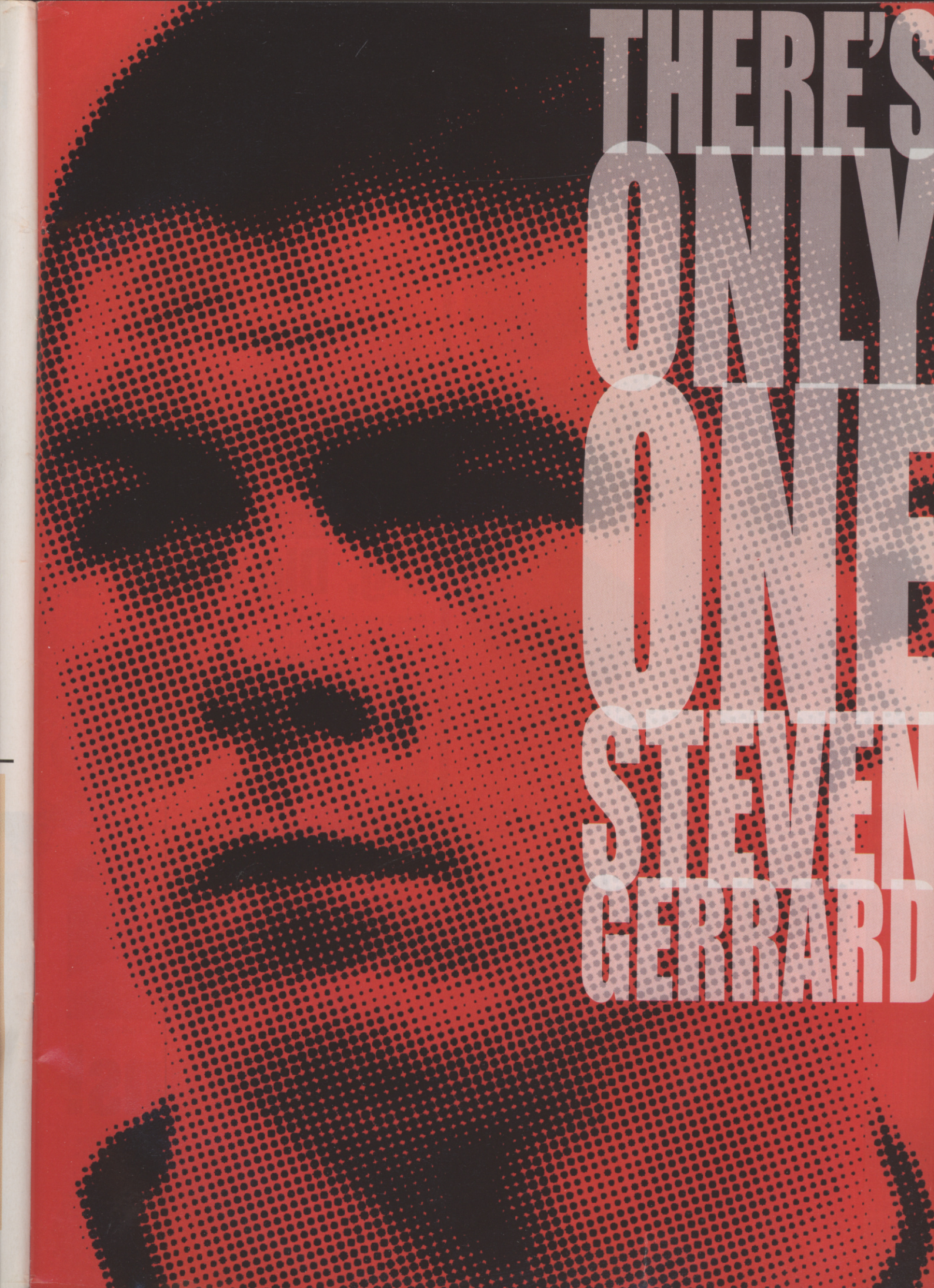


So you take it out on the coach in this bit. Cool!

Jeepers! Even if looking at these brand new PS2 Premier Manager shots is like being at a job interview, at least they go to show how the game's replacing the boring old stats tables with the 'human side' of management.

The idea is that you'll be able to bowl around having meetings with agents, coaches, physios, bank managers and chairmen, and they will all react to your decisions. Our favourite is the agent who orders you out of the restaurant. Class.

All this AND five European leagues running simultaneously to boot, make May's launch a tasty prospect indeed.


THERE'S
ONLY
ONE
STEVEN
GERRARD

Crash Test

DON'T GET LUMPED WITH TRIPE

5.1 SPEAKER SYSTEM

By: 4Gamers
Cost: £199

Or the SPC205, to its close friends. An almost affordable Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound kit that sounds great with PS2 games, DVDs and Xbox (with the right cable). Good quality sound and sleek design make this an ideal first surround sound kit.

★★★★★★★★★☆

8MB MEMORY CARD

By: Thrustmaster
Cost: £20

Only useful if you want to show mates your saved games or swap data, the Xbox memory card does exactly what is says on the tin. Much easier to get in and out than the DC joypad memory unit was and there's loads of space on it too.

★★★★★★★★★☆

FIRESTORM PROGRAMMABLE PAD

By: Thrustmaster
Cost: £20

Taking its design cue from the fantastic PC Thrustmaster pads, this Xbox controller is one of the best looking on the market. It also features programmable buttons so you can store combos in memory. A brilliant pad with a reasonable price-tag.

★★★★★★★★★☆

MULTIPLAYER ADAPTOR 2

By: Joytech
Cost: £20

It's large, but big is sometimes better, as this multitap proves. The LEDs on the unit let you know if there are any connection problems, and it's solid as a rock. Beware if you live in a dust-bowl though, as there are no covers over the memory card slots.

★★★★★★★★☆☆

Klonoa Beach Volley

NO, THIS IS NOT AN APRIL FOOL

All the characters from cute PS2 platformer Klonoa are to star in a beach volleyball game for PSone.

The series' new direction is a shock, especially since it's going to the older PS. But we love the look of it, and with PSone targeted at a younger audience, it makes sense.

Frankly, we're scared of this guy!

A cuter game just isn't possible

Coming from the same developer as Smash Court Tennis, and with a bunch of characters boasting unique special attacks, creating all kinds of visual chaos and sonic madness, it's going to rock.

The game's available from 25 April in Japan. Let's hope it comes to the UK soon after.

GREAT NEWS FOR DRILLER FANS

Dig, Dig And Dig!

About a year ago Namco's terrific new puzzle game Mr Driller came to PSone and DC.

CVG was instantly hooked, and has been a fan ever since. Now Namco Europe is looking for a UK publisher to bring the latest update, Mr Driller G, to PSone. Check our website for the publisher announcement, while we prepare a suitably great feature for the magazine.

Horinga Z is new to Driller

The two-player games rule

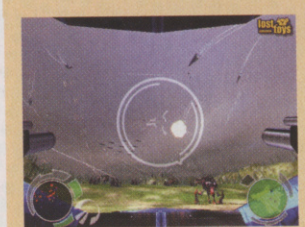
BOARD BEAUTY

Feel The Triforce

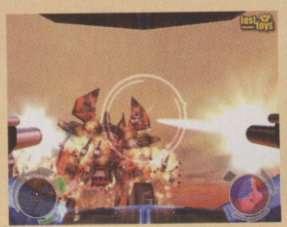
Kneel before the might of a new GameCube-compatible arcade board! It's called the TriForce and it's a joint venture between Nintendo, Sega and Namco.

As with GameCube, the ethos is high performance at low cost and ease of development. The TriForce was unveiled in Japan at the AOU Expo on February 23, but you can expect to see lots of great TriForce games from Sega and Namco in the arcades soon. One hot rumour (which is true) is that Namco has a Smash Bros type game in development, featuring all the most popular Namco characters. So, Devil Kazuya versus Pac-Man it is then! But don't expect to see that for at least a year.

BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA – NEW SHOTS



You're the mech daddy, baby!



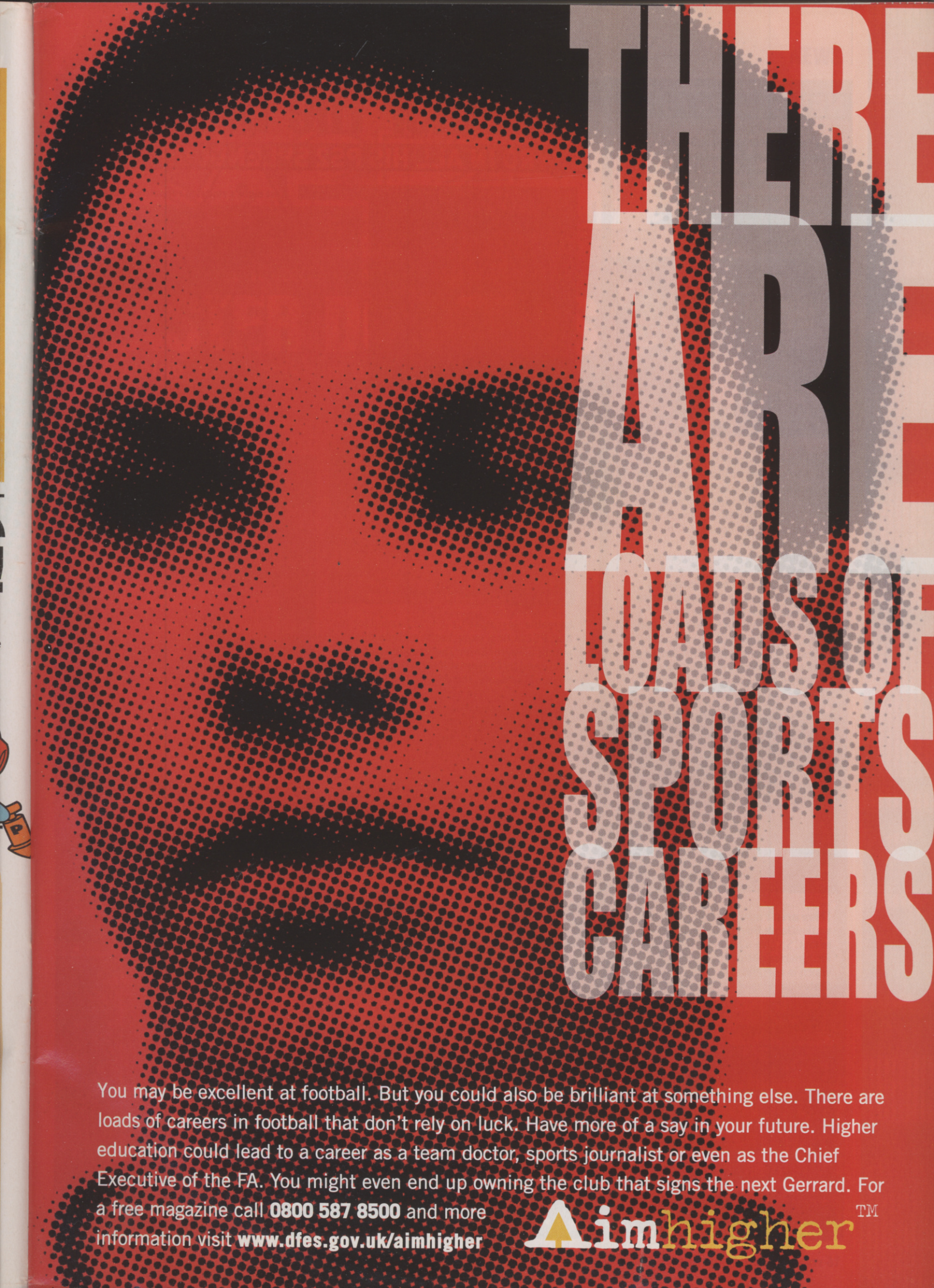
So far, visuals look mint

"Get orf my land I tells ye!"

Battle Stations!

Set your eye equipment to the 'gaze' position and fix upon these three new shots of Battle Engine Aquila.

The game's a first-person shooter for PS2 and Xbox which sees you controlling a robo death machine called Aquila. The story goes that global warming has prompted Earth into fighting battles over tracts of land. But what's really important is that Battle Engine Aqulia looks like a mega souped-up Mechwarrior, and promises to play like one, too. We'll let you know more details when we have them.



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NEWS SHORTS

Due for an autumn release in the States, Whacked! promises – wait for it – "fast and furious" fun for the Xbox, as you take on a bizarre character and scrap it out on a demented game show. It's for the Xbox and it's not about war – what manner of witchcraft is this?

BAM! Studios Europe has confirmed it will be porting its film tie-in Driven to the GameCube. The game of the Sylvester Stallone film is already on the PS2 and Game Boy Advance and even though BAM! says it will be tweaked for the GameCube, don't hold your breath – it's not much cop.

It's early doors yet and the game's currently only slated for a Japanese release, but here's a tasty dino-filled shot from Gun Survivor 3 Dino Crisis, which looks like being a lot of first-person-shootin' fun, judging from this. If it's anything like the Lost World arcade shooter, we'll be more than happy.

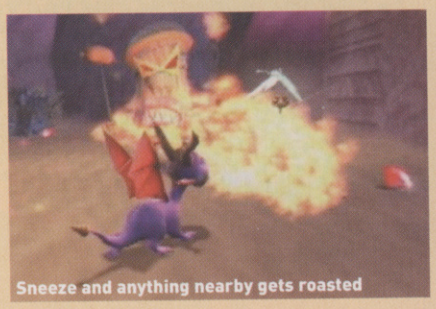
There aren't many Motocross games on the Game Boy Advance. Er, none, in fact. So give a big hand to Konami for America's Motocross Maniacs, which is currently slated for a Stateside release and bound to show up here sooner or later. Take a look at this shot. Interested? We'll have more details soon.

Re-Enter The Dragon

SPYRO IN ALL HIS PS2 SPLENDOUR

C'mon Spyro, keep flapping to reach the platform just ahead!

Last night's vindaloo repeats on Spyro



Sneeze and anything nearby gets roasted

Fly to explore every corner of the island

Look around for clues to puzzles

The game environment looks sweet as

Loveable Spyro The Dragon is headed for his first PS2 outing, expected sometime this autumn. Spyro: Enter The Dragonfly, to be published by Universal Interactive, promises more of the same, though will obviously be more beautiful than ever.

Our petite purple hero is sticking to the winning formula laid down by his adventures on PSone. Key to it all is Spyro's ability to fire all sorts of stuff from his schnoz, ranging from the basic fire attack, to bubbles and even electricity. He'll also be hopping into a diverse range of vehicles.

You have to remember that Spyro's aimed at younger players, so this isn't going to be the toughest challenge you ever faced. But a bunch of cute mini-games to keep short attention spans happy ought to make the new Spyro a success.

NIGHTMARE CREATURES FOR THE PS2

"Cut Him Up!"

We're sorry, but we've only got a measly TWO appetite-whetting shots of Nightmare Creatures 3, Angel Of Darkness, which is coming to PS2.

It's only a working title at the moment, but we bet they'll at least add a colon before it hits the streets. NC3 introduces a new sword-wielding, and very athletic heroine who'll hare around 19th century Europe dealing razor-sharp death to any nasties that get in her way. And the reason we only have two shots? Well, it's not out until the second quarter of 2003, is it?

Watch it, love, a bird's crapped in your hair

Even the new and very much improved heroine gets cold

CACKMAN

The independent voice of the free gaming nation

EASTER DOG EGGS

Warning: don't make an omelette with these!

Easter. A time for eggs. For some stupid reason. And here's a funny thing you may not know unless you're a real spod: 'Easter egg' is technical jargon for hidden stuff in computer software and DVDs.

Cackman is of course not a spod – it's his job to know these things. But since Easter is upon us he thought it would be appropriate to crack a few of the 'eggs' in some of this festive season's warm new releases. Just brace yourself for the smell, because these 'oeufs' aren't hidden gems, they're more like bad yolks. They weren't left by a chicken, or even delivered by a bunny. They were laid by the Easter Dog, and the contents are distinctly brown. Remember, even a bad egg looks good until you crack it.

STAR WARS: OBI-WAN (Xbox)

Imagine being Obi-Wan in The Phantom Menace. Waiting on the ship while all the others have fun on Tatooine, talking to Qui-Gon on a walkie-talkie, standing around saying nothing. Here you play the bits between those 'fun' scenes. Like wandering around the empty droid ship or waiting at a bus stop on Coruscant. No wonder the tedious old guffer ended up a hermit.

SHREK (Xbox)

Having rushed out to buy the film, thereby aiding it to gain the status of becoming the fastest-selling DVD of all time, have you spotted the deliberate mistake in Shrek yet? Clue: it's total pap.

But if you really love watching a load of soulless computer-generated mannequins wandering aimlessly around a forest for hours, here's another chance! Great!

The controls are so dumb you may as well mash the buttons with green sausages. Puppeteering a Danny from Hear'Say doll with your nostril hairs would be a whole lot more fun.

ARCTIC THUNDER (PS2)

This is the latest installment in Midway's ripping Chunder series, but it returns without the soothing splashback of Hydro Thunder. It's a snowmobile battle game packed with a load of genius weapons, like atomic snowballs. Plus you can perform tricks to earn the all-important vehicle upgrades. Here's a trick: eat a bucket of yellow snow.

DARK SUMMIT (Xbox, PS2)

Could be another way of saying 'brown peak'. Which may not be totally inaccurate because in this 'snowboarding adventure' you have to beat sinister park rangers to uncover the secret at the mountain top. Cackman will save you the trouble – it's a turtle's head.

BROKEN SWORD (GBA)

Nintendo's new handheld is on fire! Well, Cackman's will be if they bring out anymore cynical old-skool pap. Broken Sword revitalises the forgotten art of point-and-click adventures. Sometimes there's a reason these things are flushed away. Can't wait for the first GBA text adventure. Hell, let Cackman type the code in himself.

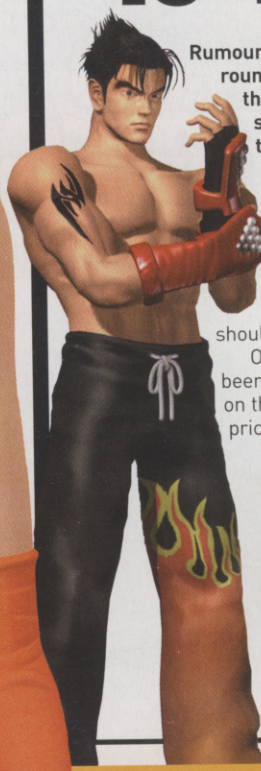
SID MEIER'S SIM GOLF (PC)

Word has it that Sim Golf is an excellent golf course management game. Okay, now read that back to yourself. Is there anything this man won't make a Sim game about? How about Sim Decorator, a real-time strategy game where you watch paint dry?

Cackman's opinions aren't necessarily those of CVG

PS2 GAMES FOR PEANUTS! ACE!

"Twenty Nicker To You, Mate"



Rumours of a PS2 budget range have been doing the rounds for some time now. Well, by the time you read this, Sony will have launched its 'Platinum' range, slashing the prices of nine awesome PS2 titles to just £19.99 each.

The games are: Gran Turismo 3, Tekken Tag Tournament, Formula 1 2001, Dead Or Alive 2, TimeSplitters, Oni, Crazy Taxi, Red Faction and Star Wars: Starfighter.

Of those, Gran Turismo 3 and TimeSplitters are both excellent PS2 games, and no collection should be without them.

Of course, retailers have been offering some of the games on the above list at a reduced price for a while, but now it's official!

The best ever driving game for £19.99

Hitomi Baby

NAMCO'S HOT NEW MASCOT GIRL

Namco recently unveiled the new virtual babe to represent its racing and sports titles. Hitomi Yoshino takes over from Ai Fukami as the face you'll be seeing in Moto GP2, Alpine Racer 3 and, you can bet on it, the next Ridge Racer.

Her 'particulars' are as follows: age 18 (born September 6, 1983), 162cm tall, blood type A. Sadly we don't know what her hobbies are or her favourite food. Don't worry though, we'll find out even if it kills us trying.

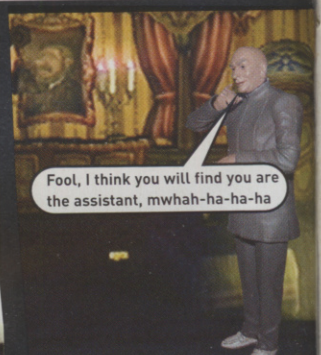
The eyes have it

DUMPED

TWO TEAMS OF INCOMPETENTS, ONE STRANGE AND EXOTIC LOCATION, FIRST HOME WINS. HELP DECIDE THEIR FATE...

The winners of Heat Two are lost in a massive, creepy mansion

Team B faces the same dilemma



But Dr Evil has other plans

You Can't Get The Staff...

NEW LOTR SHOTS

Check out the mint screenshots below for two new Lord Of The Rings games, expected at the end of the year.

Both come from Vivendi, which won the rights to make games based on the books, while EA's done a deal for games based on the films. In the meantime, here's what we've got on the Vivendi stuff.

Not to be outdone by Vivendi, EA has released a new screenie for its game too

FORMAT: GAME BOY ADVANCE

TITLE: THE LORD OF THE RINGS, PART ONE

This game calls itself a 'lite-RPG', which means it's essentially like a normal role-player but without the big fat zits. In it you control the nine members of the Fellowship, sometimes all at once, and you'll follow the basic storyline of the Lord Of The Rings books. Quite how 'on rails' this is going to make the game, we don't know, but the game promises a 'semi-linear' narrative so there's presumably a bit of room for manoeuvre.

Will Tom Bombadil show his face?

LOTR! On Advance! Be very excited

Gandalf plays an important role

Looks better than the SNES LOTR

FORMAT: XBOX

TITLE: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

A much more action-orientated game than the Game Boy release, this sees you controlling Frodo, Gandalf and Aragorn and fighting "28 types of enemies from roaming monsters to menacing 'boss' creatures". Uh, right. Say, this isn't going to be a boring side-scrolling fighter, is it? Let's hope not.

By the power of Xbox! Lookie, coloured lighting

My, what big eyes you have Grandma. Rather red, too

The action interface looks pretty straightforward

NEWS SHORTS

Nintendo has joined forces with Sega and Namco to produce arcade hardware that is compatible with the GameCube. It will allow quick and cheap conversions of arcade games to Ninty's machine.

Sega has announced it is focusing on PS2 development, with half its new games appearing on Sony's machine. Many Mega Drive and Saturn games will also be revived soon.

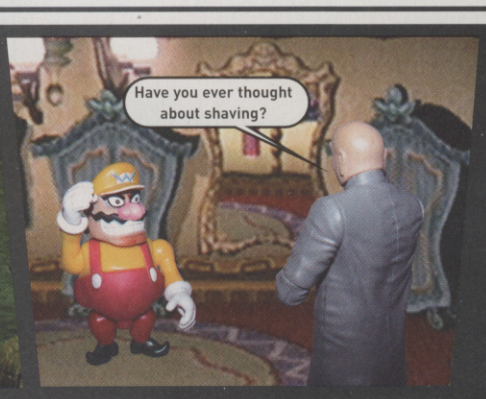
Broadband prices are moving. British Telecom is about to announce a reduction in the price of ADSL, while Blueyonder's Surfunlimited package will be going the other way.

Hot on the success of Lord Of The Rings, Vivendi has announced a 3D action-adventure based on The Hobbit, with you playing as Bilbo Baggins exploring Middle Earth. More news soon.

Codemasters has announced another expansion pack for Operation: Flashpoint, called Resistance. It features new single and multiplayer missions set on a 100km² island.

The mansion's secrets are revealed

Forget Red Bull, hunger gives Team A wings



Leaving Team B trapped, facing an eternity of small talk

WHO WINS? WHO'LL BE BACK?

Email mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

HOMER, MINI E AND EDDIE

Mark email 'Team A'

WARIO AND DR EVIL

Mark email 'Team B'

Get Fresh For The Weekend

JAP GAMES FOR SALE!

Ever found yourself eyeing up the Japanese import games in your local games shop and thinking, "If only I could read Japanese... If only I had an import machine..."?

Of course you have, you're only human. So hats off to Eidos for launching a new label, Fresh Games, which aims to release some of these cool and wacky-looking games ALL OVER THE WORLD. Yes, even here in the UK.

"Fresh Games has been created to expose gamers to unique and captivating gameplay experiences that traditionally have been unavailable outside Japan," said Eidos CEO Mike McGarvey, to the sound of drool pit-pattering onto the linoleum.

The first three games out of the Fresh stables are Mr Moskeeto, Mad Maestro and Legaia 2: Duel Saga all to be released in the spring of this year.

FRESH FRUIT

MR MOSKEETO
Called Ka in Japan, this is an action game where you play a mosquito which has to suck blood without getting splattered. Honest!

MAD MAESTRO
Released as Bravo Music in Japan, it's a rhythm action game where you conduct an orchestra to save the lives of the audience. Weird!

Don't get blood on your shirt

Save the audience from aliens

LEGAIA 2: DUEL SAGA
The sequel to the martial arts-themed RPG, Legends of Legaia. Er, not so strange...

WE WANT THESE GAMES

More Japanese games we're dying to try

TOKYO BUS GUIDE 2: BEAUTIFUL LADY BUS GUIDE
The follow-up to Tokyo Bus Guide, but with a better title.

BURGER BURGER: THE HAMBURGER SIMULATOR
Sims are particularly big news in Japan.

UP-SKIRT BRIGADE
Thanks, but we'll stick to making hamburgers.

WE MAKE THIS MAG

Meet CVG

Jenny McComb, Designer

The cold weather brought out Jenny's hibernation instincts, as she lined her nest with old N64 cartridges and copies of CVG.

Les Ellis, Games Editor

Even the cutest pup and most unsteady foal fail to bring a tear to the gimlet eyes of Mr Ellis. This is because his looks can kill.

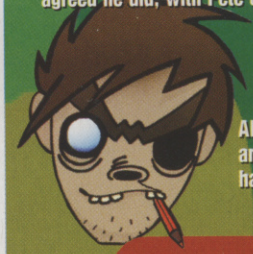
Mike Cooper, Writer

The unluckiest man on CVG, accident-prone Mike cut his nose shaving this month. Next month he is planning to stub his toe playing chess.

Dan Payne, Art Editor

Dan's constantly complaining about being mistaken for a convict, but in an office vote all apart from Pete agreed he did, with Pete opting for 'thug'.

Alex Simmons, Editor



Alex accidentally switched on his computer's character animation and it was quite literally the funniest thing to happen to CVG since the convict/thug vote.

Lee Skittrell, Senior Writer

The scientific discovery of potentially thousands of different parallel universes to our own simply prompted Lee to exclaim, "So it's just like Final Fantasy."

Pete Walker, Deputy Editor

With Pete deep into previewing Dungeon Siege from home, the rest of the office whiled away the hours by teabagging his keyboard relentlessly.

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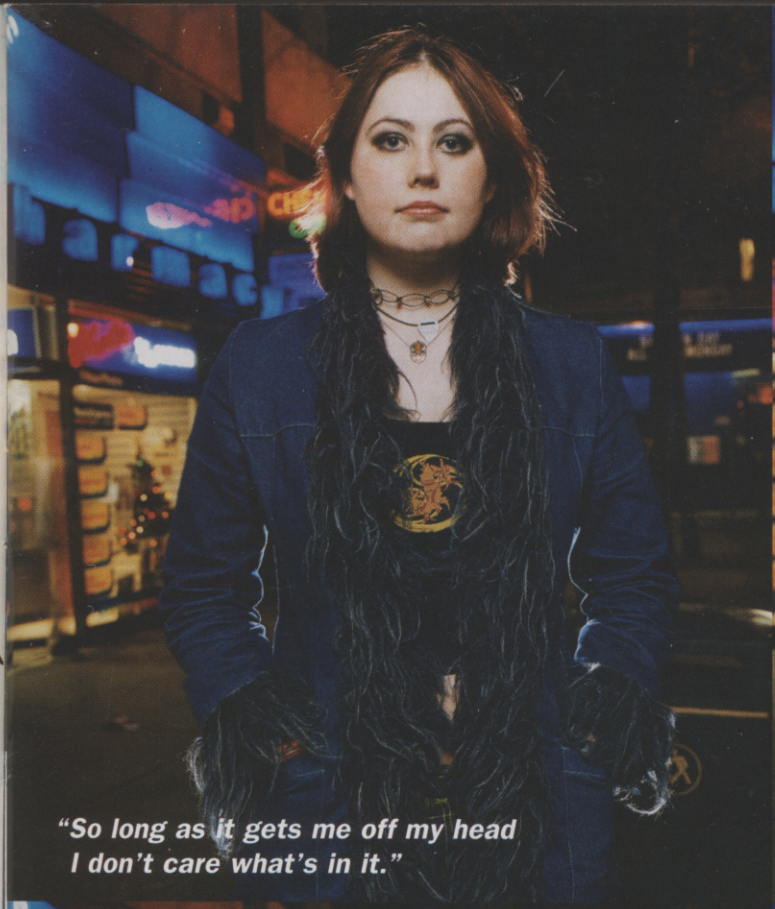
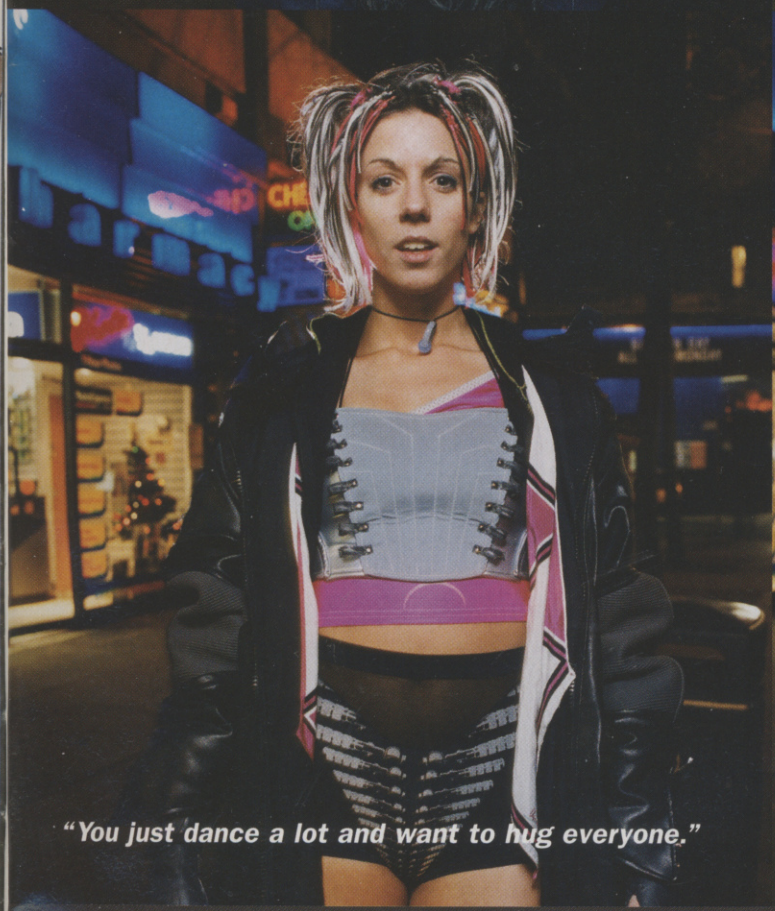
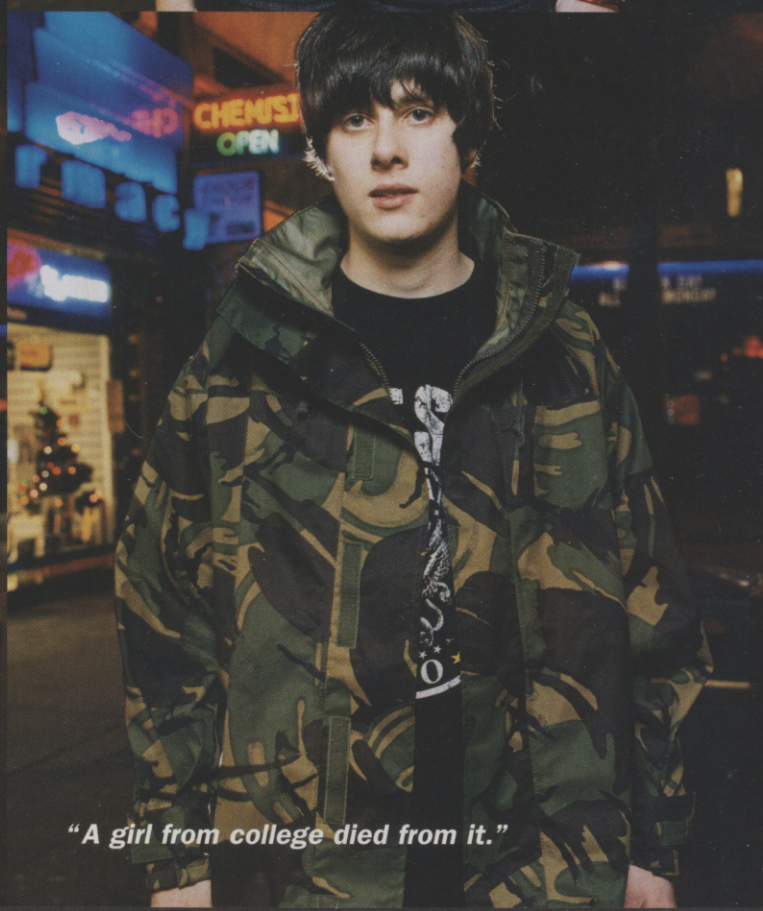


"So long as it gets me off my head I don't care what's in it."

"Pills aren't 100% MDMA, they're cut with anything."



"You just dance a lot and want to hug everyone."



"A girl from college died from it."

One place: Manchester 11:30pm 5th January. One question:

What do you know about ecstasy?

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GAME

MULTI-FORMAT TOP SELLERS

1	Monsters, Inc.	(PS, PS2, GBA, GBC)
2	Grand Theft Auto III	(PS2)
3	Max Payne	(PS2, PC)
4	Harry Potter	(PS, PC, GBC, GBA)
5	Wipeout Fusion	(PS2)
6	Ace Combat: Distant Thunder	(PS2)
7	FIFA 2002	(PS, PS2, PC)
8	Cricket 2002	(PS2)
9	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	(PS2)
10	007: Agent Under Fire	(PS2)

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STAR FOX ADVENTURES UPDATE

Fox Hunts

Fox gets busy with his transformable staff, used in all close-range combat

Alert! Alert! New Star Fox screens approaching! Shield your eyes to avoid being dazzled by sheer brilliance.

It's barely a year since we first saw Star Fox Adventures for GameCube and its looks have improved wholesale. The game premiered at E3 in May 2001, where its N64 origins were still apparent: remember this was previously under development as Dinosaur Planet for Nintendo's older technology. Now we can clearly see the benefits of GameCube power.

New screenshots of Fox McCloud, sidekick Prince Tricky (the triceratops) and new female character Krystal show luscious detail. The texture quality and complexity of models has noticeably improved and more is made of special lighting effects and realistic surfaces. Check out McCloud's fur, or the water surface, for example, and the atmospheric effects that rival those in the Bruce Willis movie Armageddon in the Arwing outer-space missions. This is shaping up to be a very special game indeed.

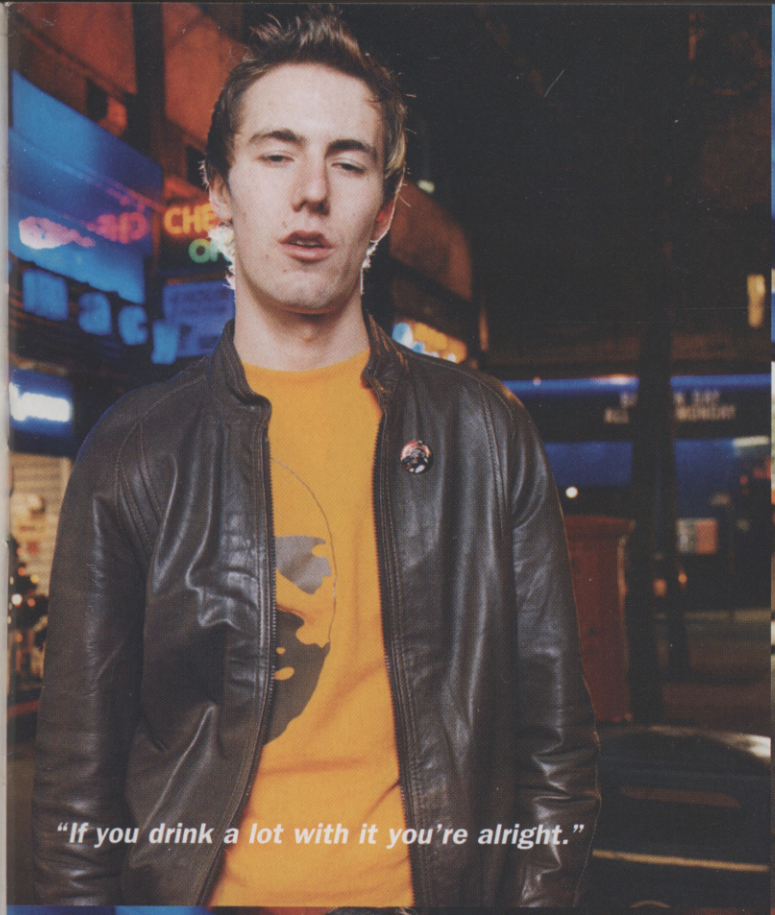
You'll need shoot 'em up skills too

Maybe this dumb dino can be of help?

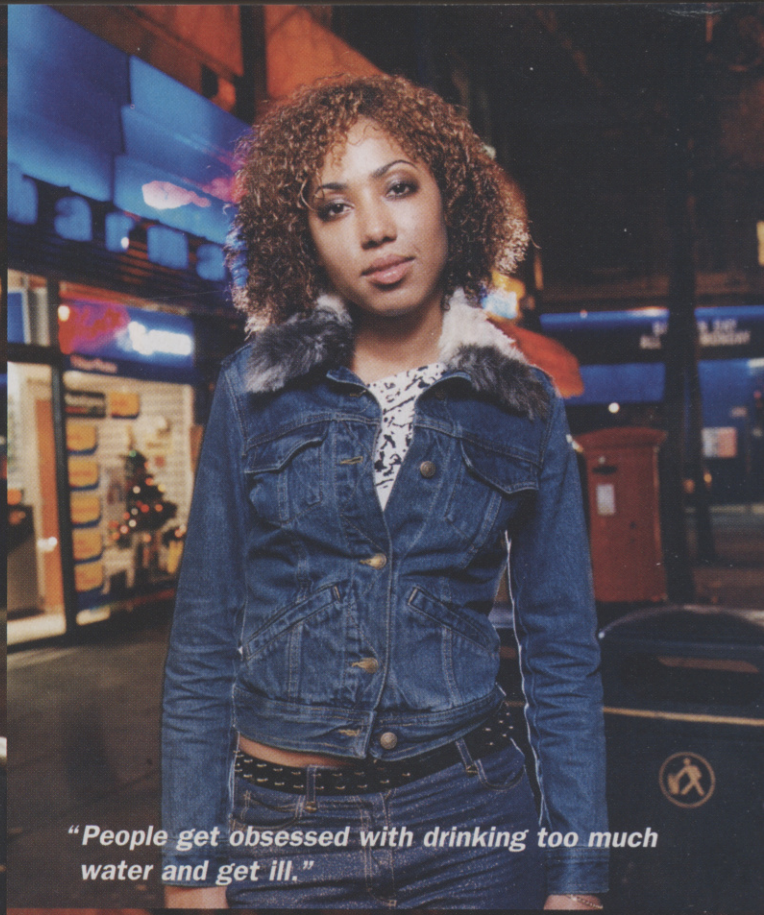
Krystal could be Fox's love interest, maybe...

Wha-ha-ha-ha! You guys kill me!

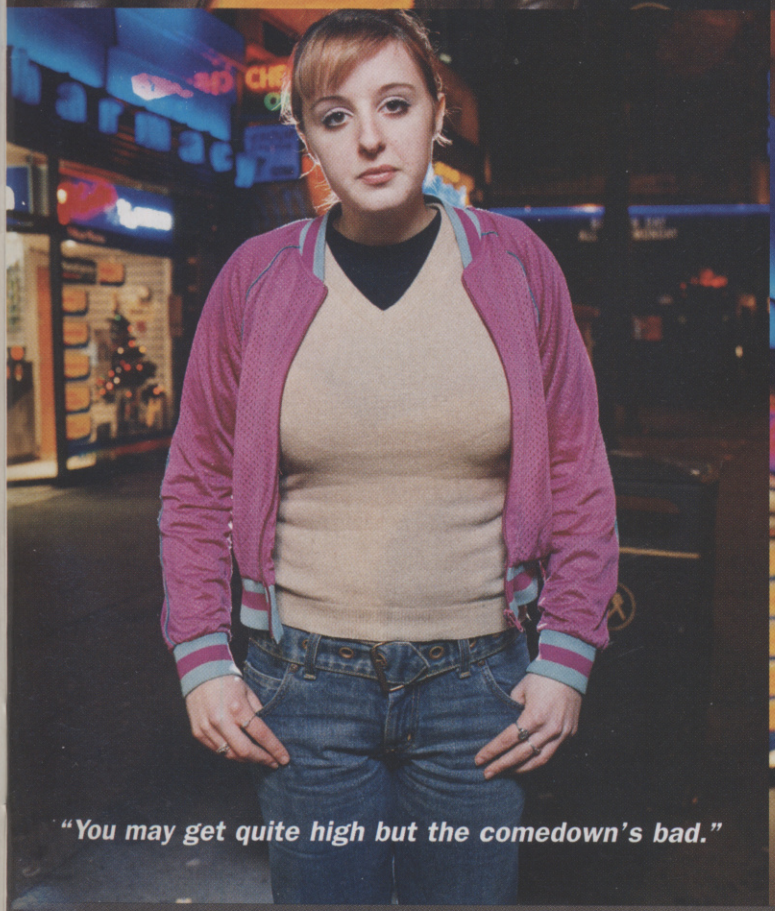
Expect something close to how Zelda plays on N64, but with cool features that include the assistance of various dinosaurs and the protection of an amazing transformable staff. No release date yet, but we're anticipating this side of Christmas. And it's not all that long until E3 2002, where we'll be able to play Star Fox Adventures again. Hurrah for that!



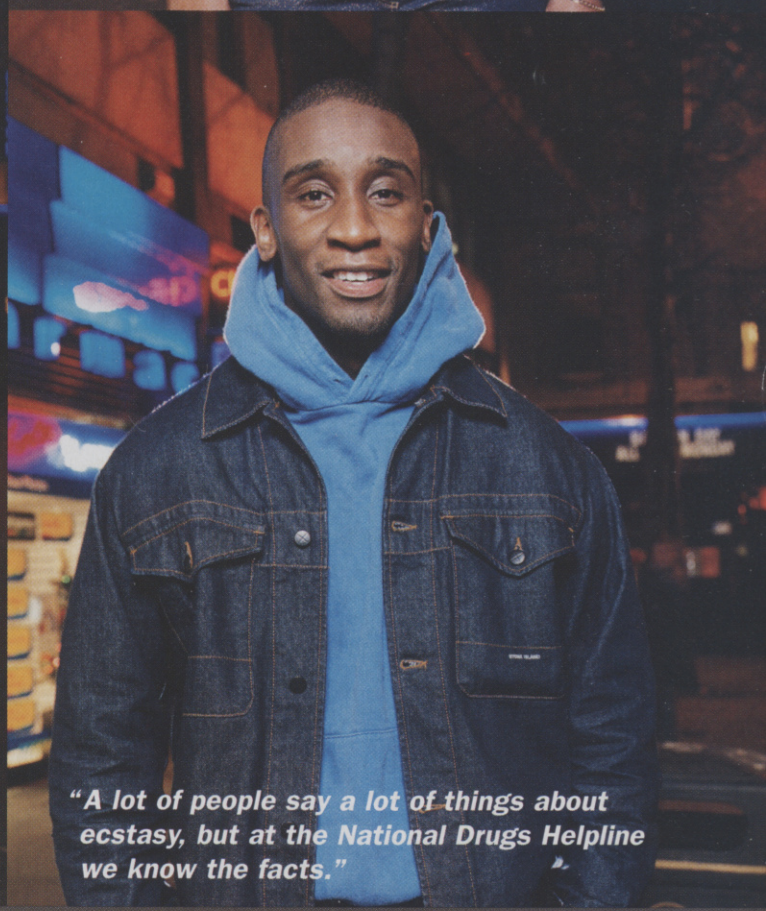
"If you drink a lot with it you're alright."



"People get obsessed with drinking too much water and get ill."



"You may get quite high but the comedown's bad."



"A lot of people say a lot of things about ecstasy, but at the National Drugs Helpline we know the facts."

national drugs helpline

0800 77 66 00

If you're not sure about the long-term effects of ecstasy such as memory loss, call us.

www.ndh.org.uk

Blind

Illustrations by Team Artonomy (www.team-artonomy.com)

Data

YOUR IDEAL PLAYMATE

Cor, what a bevy of beauties! And they could all be yours... if you're loaded. For the average playboy though, one will have to do. But how to choose? In our six-step Console Lover's Guide Tom Guise finds out how easy it is.
Warning: explicit illustrations!

MISS GAMECUBE

The youngest of the bunch, but this little cutie already has a wild imagination. Looking for a unique experience in pleasure? She's got a game involving flowers you might like, and even performs with a vacuum cleaner. But don't get too ambitious, her petite 150-110-161 frame means she can't accommodate a full-sized DVD.

MISS PS2

The original diva-D player of the console catwalk, some reckon the once-unbeatable Ms PS2 is beginning to show her age. But we think the sleek and sexy starlet is at the peak of her games. Indeed, her experience means she's got enough party pieces to please everyone. And her versatile 301-78-182 physique can perform standing up or lying down. Impressive.

TEST ONE: THE LADS

So, you've got your trophy games machine. Problem is, it's just you and her. How come the lads don't come round, even when you've decked her out with four joypads? Could it be they think your playmate is dull as a plank?

If you fancy some fourplay with your machine, she needs to serve up a decent spread when they're around. Problem is some consoles are more sociable than others. Take the GameCube. Great looker, but when it comes to getting rowdy with the boys she's decidedly tame. Sure she excels at watersports in Wave Race, And if it's spanking monkey action you want, she's can service the whole gang with Monkey Ball. But pull out flower-powered Pikmin and they'll start wilting. Rogue Leader might be Star Wars, but there's only room for one in the cockpit. As for Luigi's Mansion, you'll be doing the hoovering alone.

PS2, of course, is a complete Jack The Lad. Driving games, fighting games, snowboarding, Tony Hawk's and of course, the excellent Pro Evolution Soccer guarantee her popularity. Just one hitch: unless you've got a Multitap she can only manage two at a time.

Then, of course, there's the Xbox. She may be lacking in football appeal, but she's still a major crowd-puller. Driving games like Project Gotham and Wreckless look unbelievable, Dead Or Alive 3 lets you wrestle with large-breasted ladies, Amped delivers snowboarding cool and with Halo it's four-player intergalactic warfare all the way. She's so hard, she only drinks pints.

MAJOR GRIPES!

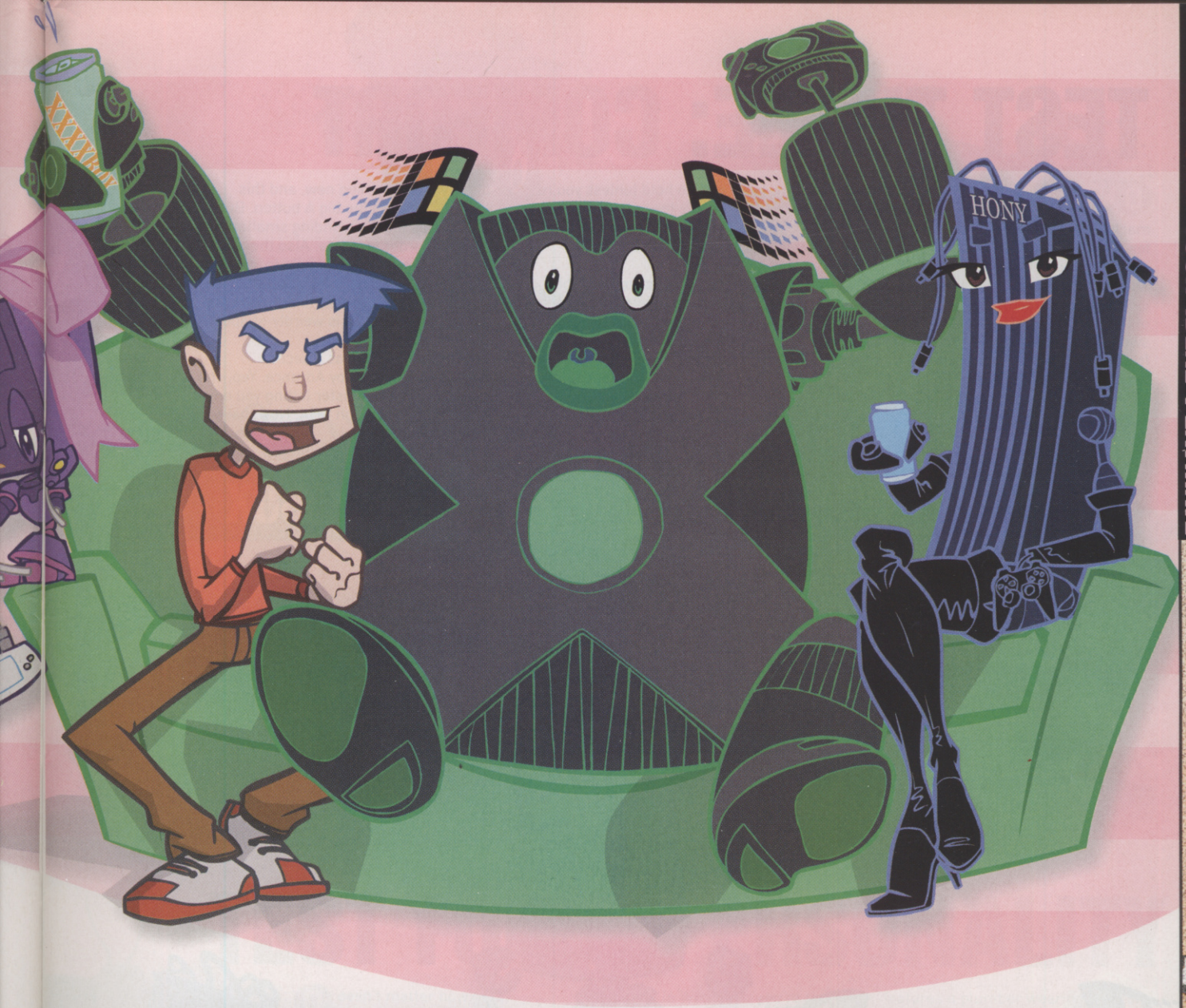
THE XBOX RESET BUTTON

It's cool isn't it? No, because it doesn't exist! When Microsoft conducted their 'extensive research' into what gamers want, did the results say "We'd like to turn the machine off every time we do something wrong?". Only as much as they said "We'd like a console as a big as caravan."

CHECK BOX

(Tick one)

- ❑ A. I want a console that earns me nuff fear and respect from my peers
- ❑ B. A machine that can entertain the gang, no matter what they're after
- ❑ C. Who cares what my friends think, I just want a wild ride!



TEST TWO: SEX APPEAL

Let's face it, looks matter. Who cares what she's like when turned on if your friends think you're harbouring a battleship in your room.

But they say beauty is in the eye of the beholder. And if you're the beholder of an Xbox you need laser treatment to remove those cataracts, 'cos you've bagged one ugly breeze block.

That green jewel might be eye-catching, but the rest of the casing looks like it's caught something less savoury.

The PlayStation 2, however – now *there's* a foxy machine. Slim, trim and nice little flaps where the memory cards plug in. Although perhaps we prefer the original PlayStation with its massive pair of buttons. To start with, we weren't sure about the chipboard-style front, but now we get the wood. And while she's distinctly flat up top, that cool logo gives her instant designer cred.

GameCube is an altogether different babe, however. A nice tight little box. We're a tad disappointed she only loads from above, but for such a compact number, she can still take four players at once. Incredible! And she comes in multiple colours. Guaranteed to turn heads.

MAJOR GRIPES!

THE PS2 'ON' SWITCH

Like, why is at the back? Forcing you to pull the machine out to switch it on or off, more often than not unplugging the power lead too. Whoever came up with this wise idea at Sony should have their head inserted up their arse – that'd teach them their backside from their front.

CHECK BOX

(Tick one)

- ☐ A. Doesn't matter to me if it sits in the corner looking like a bull chewing a wasp
- ☐ B. I fancy something tall and sexy that doesn't draw attention until turned on
- ☐ C. Something fun and mysterious that people are instantly drawn too

TEST THREE: COMFORT

Okay, things are going just great between you and your games machine. In fact, you've been enjoying a few all-night sessions together. That's when you feel the throb... in your fingers. She's fun, but she's also got joypads like lump hammers. Maybe you like that sort of thing. Maybe you love showing off your swollen arthritic knuckles to your envious friends. But it's best to know beforehand what you're getting to grips with.

And with Xbox you could be delving up to your elbows in a whole world of hurt. For a start she's got huge 'uns, although they're fairly easy to hold (unless you're Jeremy Beadle). It's those hard buttons that are the problem. You need steel-capped fingers to stop them being mashed into stumps.

PS2 delivers the most comfortable experience. Her twin toggles are easy to twiddle, and her buttons are always a joy to press. They only get tricky when you use their analog feature, which isn't often. If there's any complaint it's that the experience is a little too... ordinary.

GameCube, like her older sisters, has a unique pad. Those Nintendo girls always like trying something new, and this time it's bashing the big A button. But this makes the surrounding smaller buttons harder to locate. Also the extra Z trigger on top is a tricky fella to remember (especially for boosting in Wave Race). And the camera button (the second analog stick) is weirdly-shaped and not very comfy.

But GameCube has a secret technique... Game Boy Advance. Yep, she teams up with her sister letting you enjoy 'Cube games through GBA. Now that's gonna be fun!

MAJOR GRIPES!

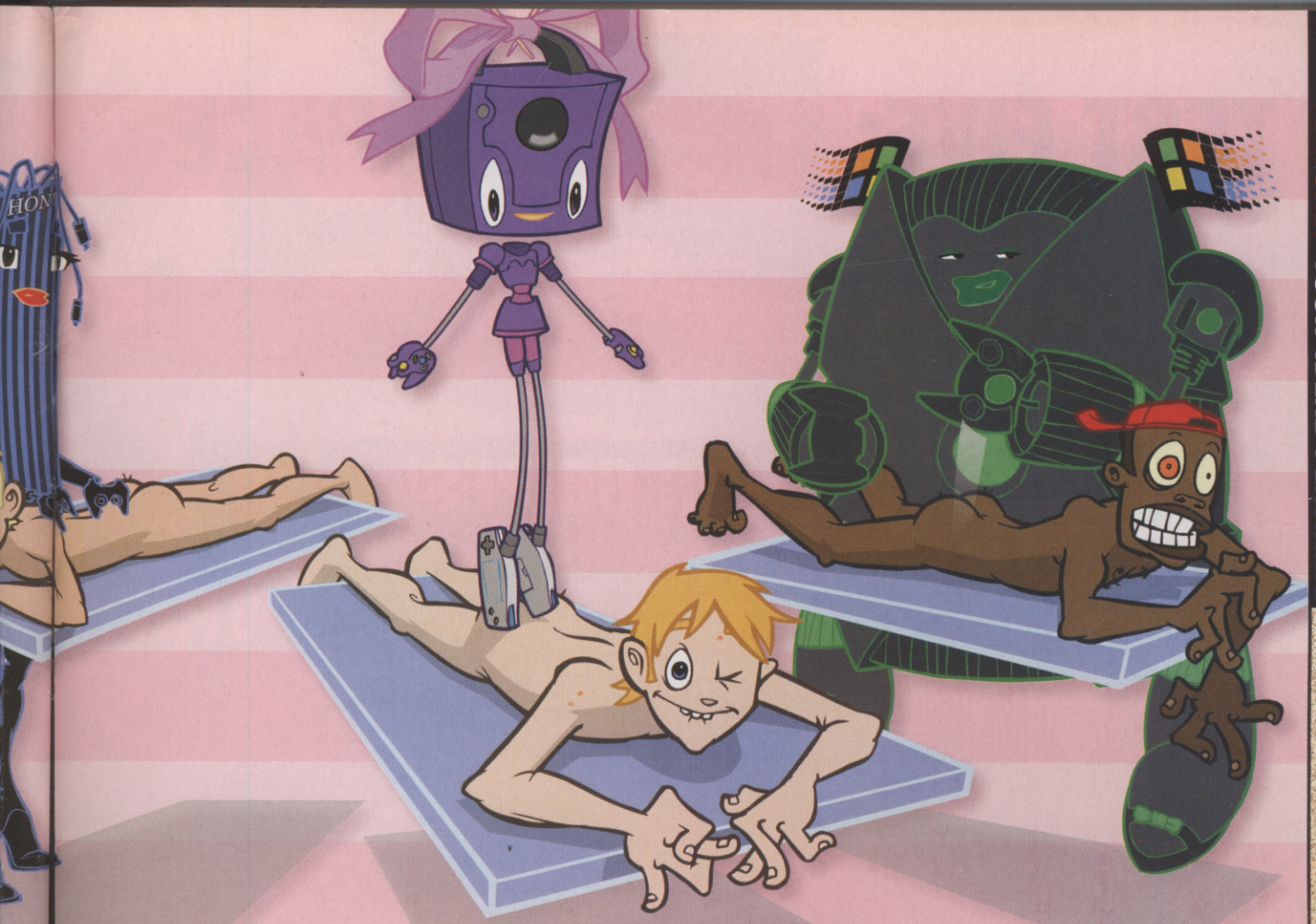
THE PS2 DVD CON

Get a PlayStation 2 – it's a DVD player too. Great, so long as you want to watch your films in green. Which you have to do, unless you play it through a crappy RF lead or use some third party mod kit. Of course, that's when it plays DVDs at all. And don't get us started about the quality.

CHECK BOX

(Tick one)

- ❑ **A. Yeah, punish me baby. Harder! I've been a bad bad boy**
- ❑ **B. No funny stuff, you hear. I'm not into anything weird**
- ❑ **C. Okay, show me some serious yoga. Oooh, that's gotta hurt...**



TEST FOUR: PERSONALITY

Doesn't matter how great everyone reckons she is, if you don't share your console's taste in games, your relationship is doomed! She may satisfy you to some degree, but why settle for crackers when you could have caviar? Or rock-cakes?

If you like your fun rough and ready, there's only one playmate for you – the Xbox. Her games are designed with macho posturing in mind. You're not just a soldier in Halo, you're a super space commando who's the talk of the battalion. In Wreckless you're ripping up Hong Kong to take down the Japanese mafia, and Jet Set Radio Future demands that you graffiti the whole of Tokyo, just to be cool.

GameCube, on the other hand, caters for the wild dreamer. These are experiences that require unique taste and a broad mind. A community puzzle-solving game with plants? That's Pikmin. Or how about Star Fox, exploring a planet of space dinosaurs? While the most awaited game this year, Mario Sunshine, features a plumber wearing a water-squirting backpack. Even the sword 'n' sorcery of Zelda looks like being a munchkin-filled cartoon.

Can't decide which way to turn? Then PS2 is your babe. Want hardcore? VF4 and Tekken 4 are coming. Urban? Try Grand Theft Auto III or State Of Emergency. Things don't get much cooler than Metal Gear Solid 2. And if it's surreal you're after, Parappa 2 or Space Channel 5.1 should spin your brain around. There's nothing this girl isn't into.

CHECK BOX

(Tick one)

- ❑ A. I like eating12oz steak, extra raw. And don't cook the potatoes
- ❑ B. When I'm at a buffet I put a bit of everything on my plate
- ❑ C. You know what I fancy? Bananas on toast!

MAJOR GRIPES!

THE GAMECUBE HANDLE

Thank god they put that there. After all, when you first try picking up the machine it keeps slipping from the grip of the steel hooks on the ends of your wrists. But hey, now you can carry it around wherever you go, and get mugged like a twat.

TEST FIVE: SHARING SPACE

The time has finally arrived when you must make that big decision with your chosen games machine – whether or not to move her into your place. But living together can raise a multitude of problems you never considered during those care-free moments at the test pod in the shop. Like, where are you going to put her? And will she fit? Welcome to the rest of your life.

GameCube is a pretty undemanding partner. Her slight build means she'll comfortably bed down anywhere. Almost. If you're the type to sport a stacked entertainment system, she might have trouble fitting in with the rest of them.

PlayStation 2 however, is a charm to have around the house. She'll slot in happily with any of your other gadgets, and if you don't want her messing with their mojo, she can just as easily sleep upright next to the telly. This girl is easy.

Alas, if only the same could be said for Xbox. You'd better clear out the spare room and lay some straw down on the floor for this lumbering sasquatch. Even if you've got room on top of the video, don't think she'll let anything go above her, thanks to her difficult domed top. And she makes the most noise too.

CHECK BOX

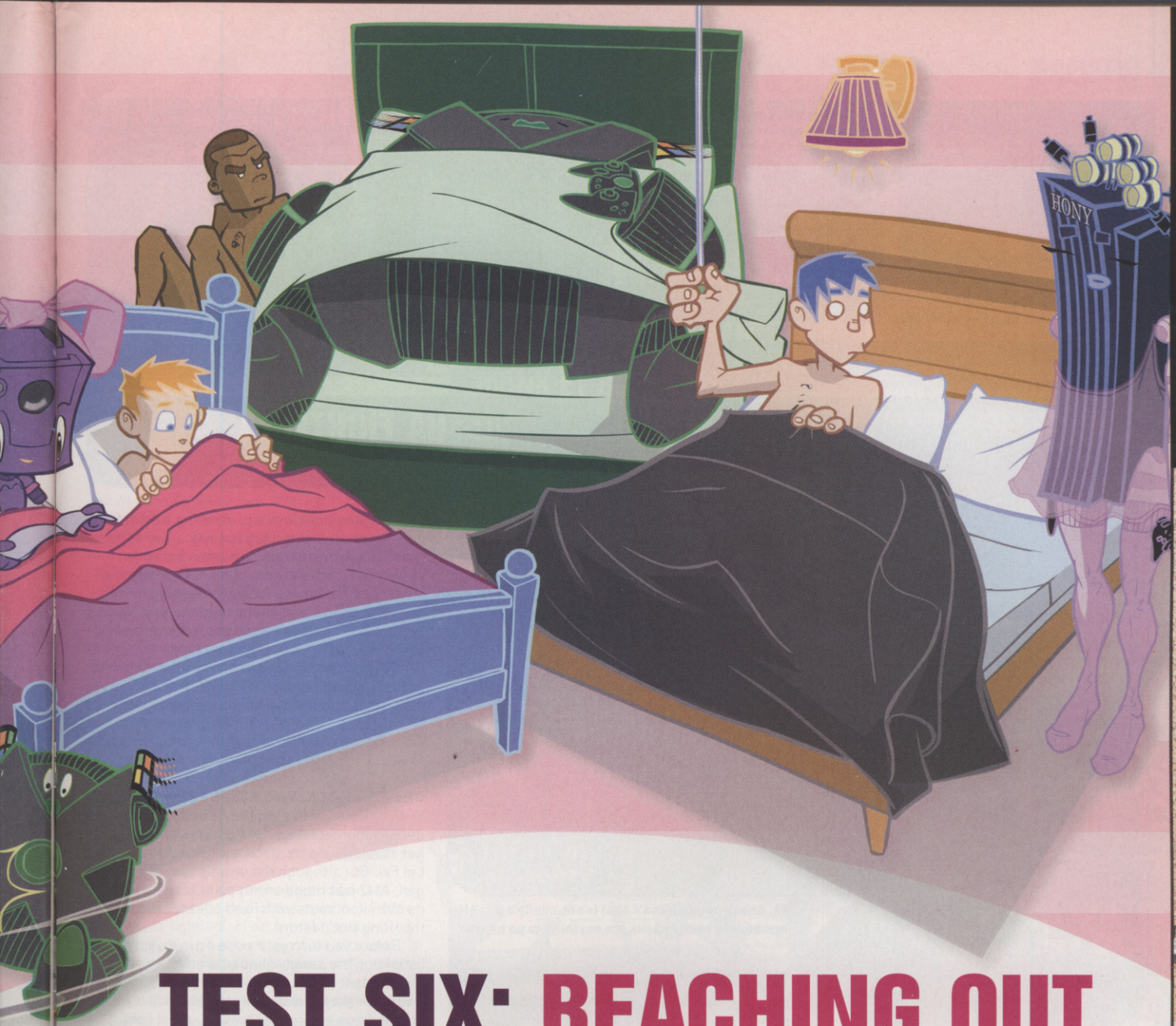
(Tick one)

- ❑ A. Go and dump your suitcases in my room, there's loads of space in there
- ❑ B. This is my place. My rules. Just don't mess anything up
- ❑ C. Room for a little one?

MAJOR GRIPES!

THE PS2 MEMORY CARDS

Essential for every game. And a snip at only thirty quid. Bet they didn't tell you that when you bought the machine. But how come you can't use your old PSone cards? Because PS2 games need Sony's state-of-the-art Memory Stick technology to store all that same gaming info that PSone did at less than half the cost. Ri-iight...



TEST SIX: REACHING OUT

Once the honeymoon period is over, you'll want your home comforts back. At the very least, you'll be expecting to sit on your own sofa. Which is no good if that inconsiderate cow's joypad cables are too short to reach. Watch out, or the old trout will have you kneeling on the carpet.

No such problem with Xbox. Big and hard with brutal pads she may be, but she's generous with her cable too, stretching out with her three metre arms to let you laze almost anywhere. But don't push it, or rather pull. Easy release sockets mean she'll drop you in a flash.

PlayStation 2 again sits neatly in the middle. In fact she may have to, as her two-and-a-half metre cables are tantalisingly too short to reach across the room. Meaning at best you have to perch precariously on the edge of the sofa, possibly pulling her to the floor following an excited tug.

Finally, there's the sweet little GameCube. Don't be fooled! Her thrifty two metre leads guarantee she'll force you to grovel on the floor. Still, if submissive behaviour in front of a midget is your thing, it won't matter a jot.

CHECK BOX

(Tick one)

- ❑ A. If I can't sit my bony ass on the sofa I'm not a happy camper
- ❑ B. Damn, it feels so good dislocating my shoulders. Do it again!
- ❑ C. Until I get a bad case of piles, I'm quite happy sitting on the floor

MEET YOUR PLAYMATE

Now tally up the results of your check boxes and find your true console love below...

MOSTLY As

You like your games full-on and meaty, pain doesn't bother you and it seems that beauty doesn't either. The big-boned behemoth that is Xbox is for you.

MOSTLY Bs

Variety is the spice of life, and you want it all, delivered without any fuss by a cool, stylish machine. PlayStation 2 is your machine.

MOSTLY Cs

Inventiveness is what appeals to you. And you're short on space. You want a unique experience from a fun, unpretentious machine. You want a GameCube!

PREVIEWS

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **MAY 10** DEVELOPER: **AM2/SEGA** PUBLISHER: **SONY**

Jacky plants his fist deep into Wolf's gut

"Lion, what the hell are you doing? Stand up and fight, man!"

Check out Vanessa's abs! Is she really a girl? If her bouncy round norks are anything to go by, yes

Popping bubble wrap, drinking ice-cold beer on a scorching hot day... two of the most satisfying feelings a human being can experience. But the sensation of countering a string of speedy attacks and smashing someone in the face as the mad monk in Virtua Fighter 4 is as close as you can get to nirvana without actually popping your clogs.

Sega's latest brawler is the most sensational hardcore beat 'em up CVG has played on PS2 to date. Next month CVG will be going huge on both Tekken 4 and VF4, but Namco's big hitter will have to pull off some pretty special moves to wow us the way Sega's stunner has so far.

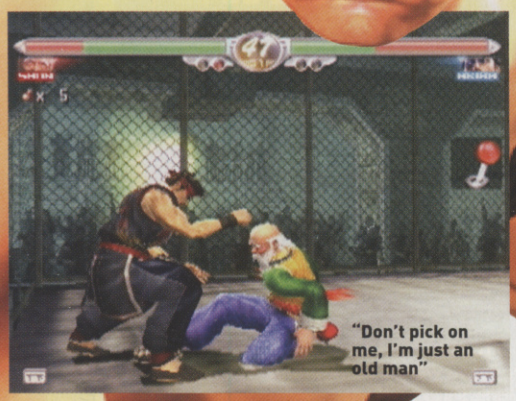
ONE STEP BACK, TWO STEPS FORWARD

VF4 is packed with a cast of 13 incredibly detailed fighters, like newcomers Vanessa, with her shimmering six-pack, and nimble-footed Lei Fei. But although the visuals are very next-gen, AM2 has made a firm point of maintaining its old-skool roots with fixed square arenas and the 'Ring Out' feature.

Before you turn your nose up in disgust, listen up! The simply shaped arenas are one of the greatest things about VF4 and the series as a whole – they add another level of skill to the proceedings in terms of how you must fight. Unlike its rivals, the action in VF4 is as much about manoeuvring your fighter around the

Lei Fei sticks his foot in Lion's face

Lei Fei smacks the wind out of Wolf


"Don't pick on me, I'm just an old man"

The leaves are falling and so is Lion

A good old suplex does the job

RAVEN GAMES LONDON
Import game supplied by Raven Games.
Tel: 020 8663 6822 Email: info@ravengames.co.uk

If all looks calm, think again

"Let go of my hair!" Girls will be girls

The Great Wall of China – cool

Tonight, Matthew, I'm going to be the Village People...

small fighting platforms as putting together flurrying combos and counter-attacks. Exactly what 3D fighters were made for.

THE ART OF FIGHTING

The wealth of spectacular attacks, combos and counters in VF4 is truly mind-blowing. Taking time to go through all the new training challenges with a chosen fighter is well worth it, because you'll come out the other end equipped with a mammoth repertoire of skills that make your fights, against both AI characters and your mates, look like the kind of slick fight sequences that you'd only expect to see in a movie like Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon. Plus the thrill of being able to move around and fight with all the grace of Jet Li and the brute force of Lennox Lewis is immeasurably rewarding.

As well as swanky new moves, new fighters, and mint breakable arenas, VF4 brings with it a number of other cool gameplay additions, features and treats. One of the most noticeable additions to fighting action is that brawlers can now get stunned, but with some well-timed Dpad wiggling and button combos, it's possible to immediately break your dazed state and swiftly counter-attack.

Another significant feature is the ability to train AI characters to fight in a certain style, then save their profiles. There's even a hard disk option in the opening title screens.

VF4 is set to sucker punch all the other beat 'em ups off your shelf once it's released this May. But then, make sure you catch next month's CVG, when we put VF4 and Tekken 4 up against each other in a no-holds-barred bare knuckle fight to the death.

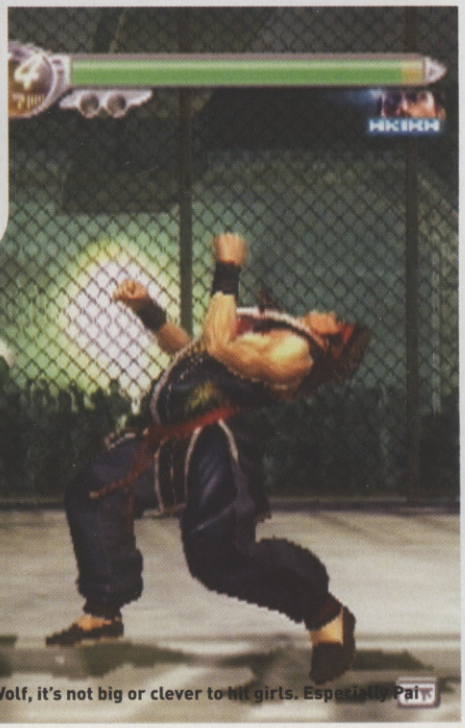
MONK-EY BUSINESS

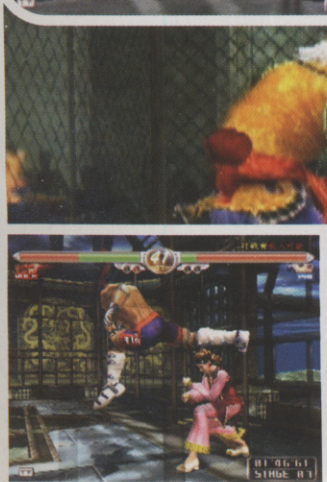
Lei Fei's one of the two new fighters in VF4, and he's possibly the coolest character ever to have been born from the Virtua Fighter series. Apart from being a badass Buddhist, this cat is blessed with some of the finest and most fluid moves of any fighter in the history of beat 'em ups, and they're all blended together beautifully with his stunning array of fighting stances. Believe.

Check out Lei Fei's four main stances: each one boasts a set of unique strikes and counter attacks

Helicopters fly over and shine spotlights on you

Shun gets a little carried away and cracks Akira in the jaw with his little clay wine bottle





Hey Wolf, it's not big or clever to hit girls. Especially Pai

That doesn't look natural

CVG RECKONS

Could this be the David to topple the Goliath Tekken 4? Looks like it's going to be close, because VF4 is shaping up to be a killer opponent. Mike

Through the mists, a hero emerges. She's big and cruelly beautiful, and with her deceptively simple charms (and loads of giant pointy swords) she'll cleft in two the ugly, stat-heavy hordes of role-playing games. She's called Dungeon Siege, and she's a bit of a babe.

Our screenshots should speak for themselves: the huge, rolling, multi-layered forest, ice caverns and dungeons are packed with delicious detail like swaying trees, falling snow and flickering torchlight. They're also rammed with danger, to keep you constantly on edge: from ambushing packs of wolves that lunge realistically at you from the forest undergrowth to the sounds of half-man, half-spider freaks that scuttle through the dungeon shadows.

Character development is also a revelation: level up and you are automatically assigned ability and skill points according to how you play that character (for example archers get dexterity and ranged skill points). Which makes it a cinch to pick up and play, but also packs real depth as your party grows. At last, a pretty PC role-player for the masses? Just maybe.

HUMAN TANK-TICS

Your farmland has been invaded by the evil Krug and you must gather together a band of hardy adventurers to find out why. Choosing the right formations for them to travel and fight in is vital – you can even adjust their spacing. So, man-tanks to the front, archers to the sides and mages at the back?

Act smart. Use Gyorn on this lift as bait for the howling mob

...and your archers can pick 'em off a few at a time

This one's definitely too close for arrows...

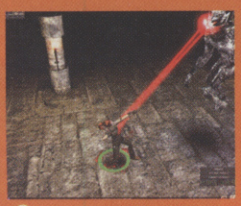
...so retreat and fire at the dynamite barrels. Boom!

"She's a beauty, and easy to pick up 'n' play"

DUNGEON SIEGE

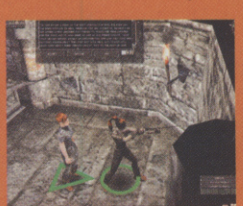
FORMAT: **PC** OUT: **APRIL 19** DEVELOPER: **GAS POWERED GAMES** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**

TOTALLY BOSS



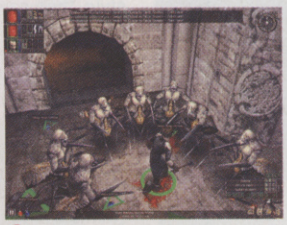
Laser-eyed bosses like this gargoyle can be really huge...

...and often deadly...



...but beat them for rewards such as new party members

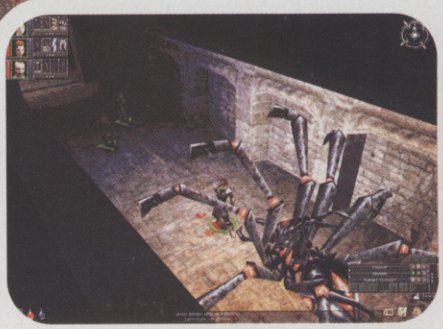
As any hippy knows, henges restore health. Peace, man



Adjust your party's reactions to turn Gyorn into Custer

Comic-style weapon motion lines look sweet, like Gyorn's axe

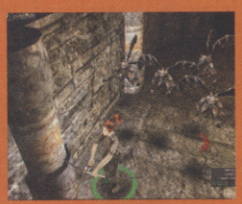
Sometimes all seems clear, then whoosh!



Even human tank Gyorn can't drink health potions and fight at the same time

...while his attack animations are cool too!

ZOOM WITH A VIEW



Mouse control means zooming in too close makes retreating tough...

...wiley adventurers see more when zoomed out. Oh, and you can rotate and tilt

CVG RECKONS

A luscious looker that could be the big role-playing event on PC for this year. When they finally release it. **Pete**

IT CAN BE HARD TO ADJUST TO REALITY.

XBOX

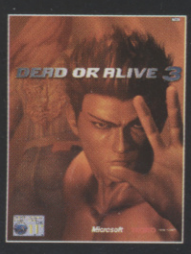
TECMO

ONLY ON XBOX

OK, so you'll think you're a black belt once you've experienced the breathtaking DOA3. Boasting multi-tiered game play, scenery that can be trashed and amongst others, two new trouser arousing characters: Christie and Hitomi. DOA3 gives other fight games a damn good kicking. So, no surprise CVG magazine reckon 'No beat'em up has ever felt as smooth and looked as sexy.' But please remember, it's a whole lot easier to kick ass on Xbox than in reality.

www.xbox.com/uk/doa3

PLAY MORE. PLAY DEAD OR ALIVE 3.™



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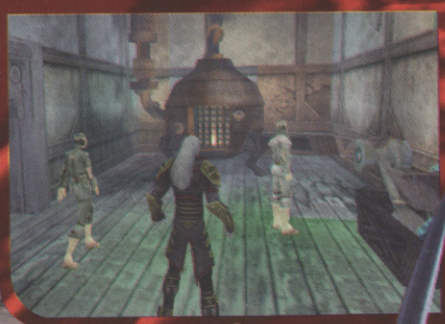
BLOOD OMEN II

FORMAT: PS2/XBOX OUT: APRIL DEVELOPER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS PUBLISHER: EIDOS

Blood Omen II is set after the first in the series, Blood Omen, but *before* Blood Omen: Soul Reaver and indeed Soul Reaver II. It focuses on uber-vampire Kain's rise to power, which then leads neatly on to Soul Reaver. You see, Raziel, the star of Soul Reaver, is Kain's son, but they don't get on too well... Then again, who cares? Blood Omen II is a gloriously over-the-top bloodbath where you get to slaughter innocent people and suck on their veins. Class.

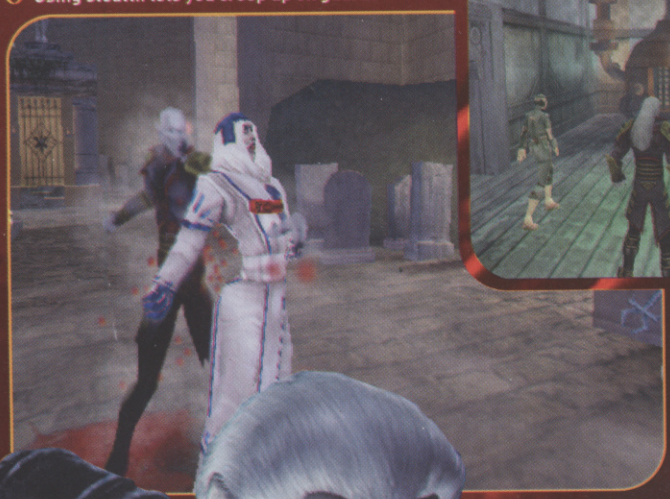
Nick a sword when using your hands gets dull

That wheel may open the gate, but where's the power switch?



The Dark Gift of mist has got you up close and now it's time for bloodletting

Using stealth lets you creep up on guards



VAMPUZZLING

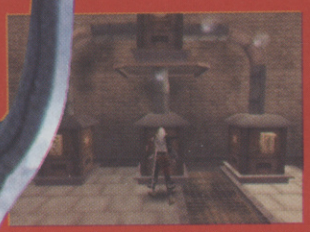
Blood Omen has graduated from the top-down slashing romp with role-player elements that we saw on PSone to a more gore-soaked 3D action adventure. You'll be tempted to make the obvious comparisons with the Soul Reaver series and Tomb Raider, but in fact it's better thought-out than these. For example, the way the levels have been designed with open spaces you can run through, along with Kain's fluidity of movement, mean that you won't be crashing into walls or experiencing any embarrassing moments with high ledges and long drops.

Little time is wasted on fruitless exploration as the 'where' is obvious; it's the 'how' that delays your progress through these fairly linear levels. The puzzle elements are never brain-bustingly complex, but you'll still be smirking smugly when you pull them off. Powering up levers and switches may be quite basic, but use one of your Dark Gifts – like the power to turn your body into mist – to sneak past a guard and the game soon gets more immersive.

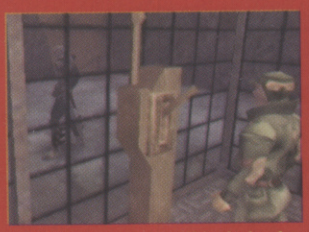
BOII certainly lives up to the series' gory reputation, with you recharging you life by sucking the bloos out of anyone who attacks. If the guards aren't enough to satisfy your

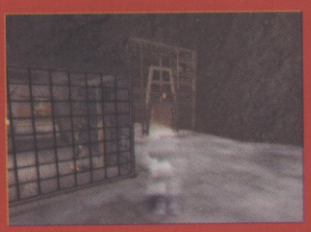
TRICKS OF THE TRADE

It's not like the old days – vampires can't rely solely on scaring the crap out of people or biting them to get their unholy work done any more. Now they have to use their brains as well as their teeth to get past these folks.

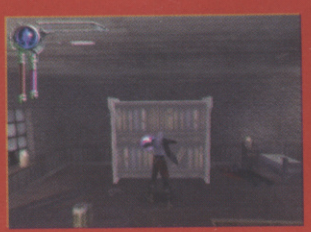


Re-route the deadly gas towards the guards so you can get through the door

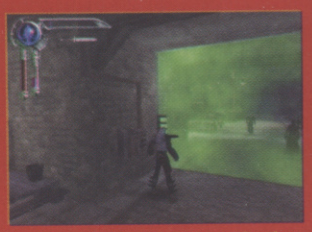




When he sees you he'll lock the door, so use a Dark Gift to sneak by



Some furniture removal is needed



And force fields need de-activating

Think you've gone far enough for a first date there, fella

Biting the neck is not essential

Up close and personal is where the real blood-gushing stuff happens

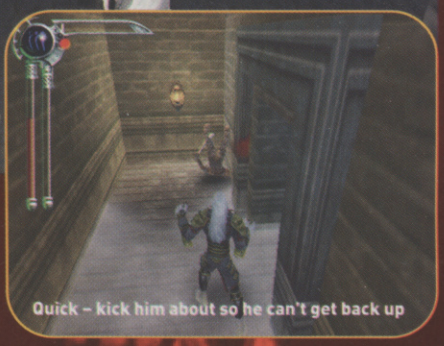
Let them help you then suck 'em dry

"Claret is splashed far and wide in this fangfest"

An excuse to show you a scantily clad female perhaps?

Good distracting technique

He's set up for a grab attack, so rip his guts out



Quick – kick him about so he can't get back up

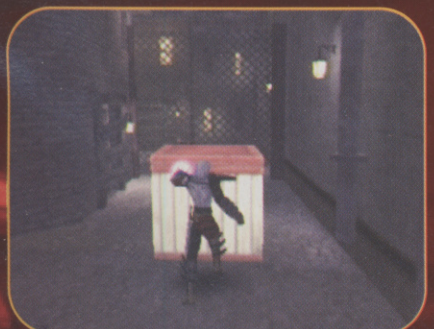
bloodlust, you can always bump off a few cowardly townsfolk. However, your attackers don't just sit back and let you get on with it, they fight back, and that's where the vampire skills you *don't* see in the movies come in.

Kicking and punching may seem a bit more Buffy than gory, but when your target is on the ground it is fun to lay in a few more boots to stop them getting up. Anyone who attacks you can be disarmed, and you can use their weapons against them or anyone else. This way, you slowly progress from clumsy clubs to some amazing swords. And using these on targets who are trying to get up is sadistic but even more fun.

Blocking and Kain's special grab attacks add to your arsenal of offensive moves, and make combat a lot more varied. But with moves that include ripping someone's heart out, you'll probably find yourself repeating your favourite a lot of the time.

Mission-based objectives, varied combat, fluid control and some very cool puzzles are enough to make us want to see a lot more of this and hopefully some currently lacklustre-looking levels won't spoil it. It certainly has fangtastic potential but will it deliver when the stakes are so high?

The bigger the weapon, the more it messes the blighters up – obvious but useful tip



Move crates around so you can jump fences

The auto-targeting system makes play easier

CVG RECKONS

If there's as much gameplay as gore then you'll be laughing. Plus the combat is good with or without weapons and the puzzles are enjoyable too. Looks promising so far. **Les**

SUMMONER 2

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **CHRISTMAS** DEVELOPER: **VOLITION** PUBLISHER: **THQ**

After watching Lord Of The Rings you're probably in the mood for a few hours of orc-bashing. Well, if you can hang on until Christmas then Volition has a real treat for you, even if the mention of a sequel to Summoner doesn't fill you with joy at first.

And this would be understandable, as the original did have the worst pop-up and draw distance we had seen. Ever. It was so bad you'd swear lead hero Joseph had been at the grumble mags for far too long; the poor lad couldn't see more than two feet in front of his face.

However, Volition has since worked out how the PS2 works and is back with what looks to be a greatly improved fantasy epic, starring a tasty young lady as the heroine. This time the camera is far closer to the action, giving the gameplay a heavier emphasis on combat. The game revolves around party adventuring, with you joined by various other fantasy misfits such as Sangaril, a blue-skinned assassin. And when we got a chance to road-test the latest version of the game recently, we got to grips with Sangaril's sneak-and-slash abilities. It's nasty stuff, and shows that you can expect a far more rounded adventure this time.

The most miserable blue fish-man in the world. But you get to kill him, thankfully

Insert blue mouth eats red-head gag here

Tag team action leaves baldy squirting

A new heroine and all the goblins you can handle

Pava transformed as the Blood Juggernaut. Feel her roar!

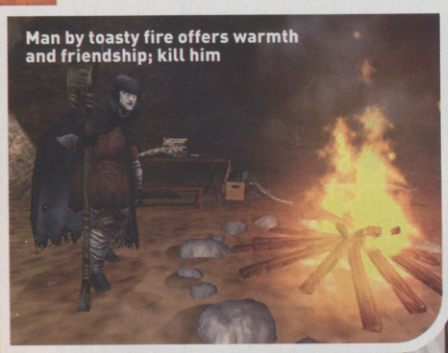
Dead flat characters hopefully won't make it in

I HAVE THE POWER

Summoning has been altered from the original. Whereas Joseph could evoke various spirits, ghouls and beasties to do his dirty work, your character Pava actually turns herself into rampaging monsters when the going gets tough. The only one we've seen so far is the Blood Juggernaut, a huge, red, rocky thing with large fists, but we're promised the full gamut of 12 creatures in the final game.

With action ruling the roost here, there's every reason to keep a keen eye on this one. It's sure to be an enormous, quality adventure.

Dahlin, you look simply dazzling in that shade of blue; shame about the horns though...



Man by toasty fire offers warmth and friendship; kill him

Your party will hold up to five characters. Mrs Blue here is Sangaril

Bok. Expect plenty of sword-play this time round

Pava bridges the gap between rock hard nutter and a large pair of breasts with a certain style and panache

CVG RECKON

With its refreshing features, we could have a fantasy winner here, especially with so few role-players gracing PS2. Pat

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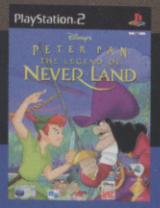


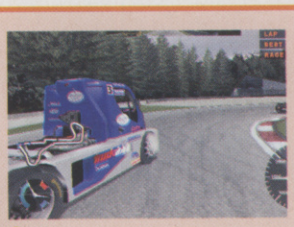
Guess who's got Disney's new Peter Pan game?

Battle pirates and beat the villains as you fly through magical lands in search of the hidden treasure. Also available on PSone.

uk.playstation.com

PlayStation.2
THE THIRD PLACE

What the hell is that in the passenger seat? It's enough to put you off the road!



The winner gets tea rather than champagne – very glam...

You'll find yourself taking most corners sideways as you slide around all over the shop

Real trucks, real races, real damage – crunch 'em

SUPER TRUCKS

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **APRIL**
DEVELOPER: **JESTER** PUBLISHER: **JESTER**

What a great idea – a racing game featuring the kind of monster lorries you usually see creating gridlock in a city centre because they can't turn tight corners.

But while it may seem like a step backwards after throwing rally cars round tracks in Gran Turismo 3, these babies are no typical 18-wheelers with a top speed of 30mph. Nope, these souped-up beasts can clock 150 and race around courses designed for much smaller cars. The result? Total carnage.

Unlike F1 where you're disqualified just for looking at another car the wrong way, truck racing is a contact sport. These petrol-guzzlers can ram and crash into each other, which is just as well seeing as they can barely make corners when they're doing 30, let alone when they're flat out side-by-side with another rig.

It's spiced up with suitably heavy handling, so you're constantly struggling to keep your monsters under control. Fun if you like your games big – in every sense of the word.

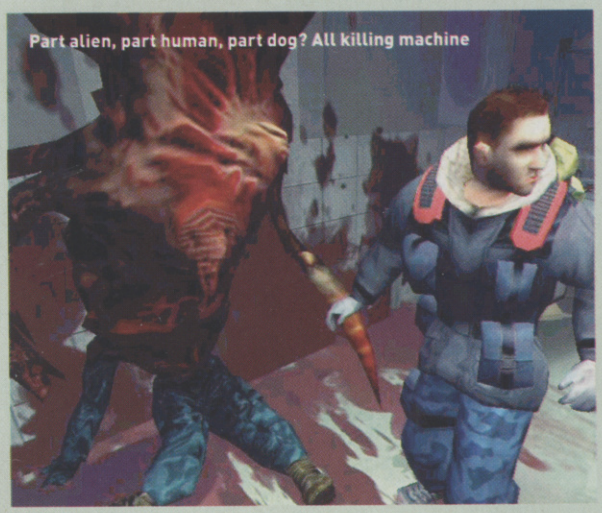
CVG RECKONS

Short-lived fun that lacks the depth of F1, or redneck racer that's big on thrills? Find out next month. **Les**

Things are going to get messy

THE THING

FORMAT: **PC/XBOX/PS2** OUT: **SUMMER** DEVELOPER: **COMPUTER ARTWORKS** PUBLISHER: **VIVENDI**



Part alien, part human, part dog? All killing machine

Heads on legs, one of the less scary elements of the game

Friend or foe? If you don't find out fast, you're toast

Seen the movie? If not, go watch it now. It's got so many cool scenes, generated dozens of imitations and now, 20 years after it's debut, it's spawned a horror thriller game.

The game kicks off pretty much where the film ended. You play the leader of a military squad called in to investigate why contact has been lost with an Antarctic research laboratory. One thing becomes obvious from the opening scenes: whatever has gone wrong, it involves a lot of gore – we're talking brown-trouser time. And while the combination of survival horror and gun-toting action on its own would be enough to get you shaking, it's when you're faced with an enemy that can take any shape or form that tension and paranoia start to build.

As the full horror unfolds, you find out just whom you can trust, and who or what has survived. You'll need to watch your own team closely, in case they decide to freak out and take you with them, all the while delving deeper into a chilling world of terror, action and some of the weirdest alien forms you will ever see. Watch the movie to see what we mean.

Do you think your comrades are acting suspiciously? Oh well, best just kill 'em anyway!

CVG RECKONS

Heaps of guns and gore, just as we like it. Be prepared to be very, very scared. **Rhianna**

ISS2

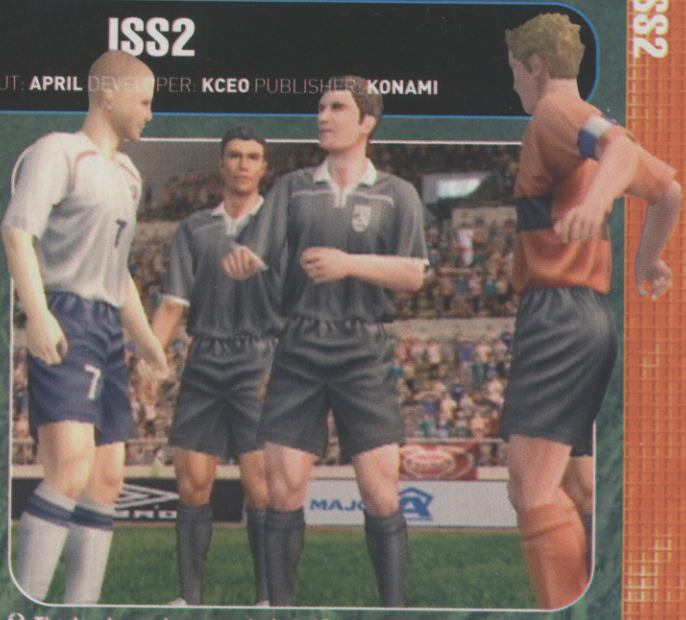
FORMAT: PS2 OUT: APRIL DEVELOPER: KCEO PUBLISHER: KONAMI

As Pro Evolution Soccer lords it up, Konami's forgotten child, the original International Superstar Soccer for PlayStation 2 is lying in a gutter somewhere, swigging meths. But developer KCEO is set to make its sequel ISS2 the golden balls of PS2 soccer, with visuals to rival PES's slick presentation and arcade-style gameplay that's fast and fun.

Aimed at fans who struggle with the ultra hardcore and realistic action of PES, ISS2's controls, set pieces and tactics have all been dumbed down to create a more openly accessible footie experience. The action is also a lot more dribble-heavy: unlike in PES, you can do a Maradona by shimmying through the entire opposition, down the whole length of the pitch before unleashing a bullet from 20 yards and scoring a screamer in the top left corner. This element would undoubtedly bug the hell out of PES freaks, but ISS2 is all about scoring buckets of goals, meaning that it's loads easier to pop one past the keeper at close range, too.

It's not as intense as PES

Heskey storms the defence



The developers have even included Beckham's poncy diamond stud

GREASY PALMS

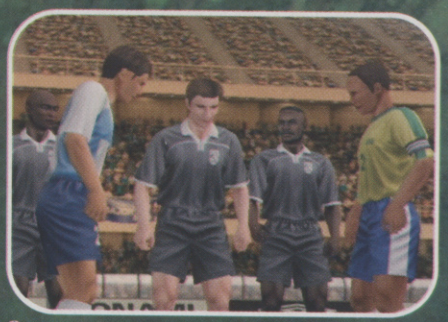
ISS2 isn't without its flaws, however. There are some annoying ticks that crop up all too often. Take as an example the way the keeper almost always fumbles the ball after a player's whacked it straight at him, usually resulting in a scrappy goal scored from the rebound. Naturally, this provides for an experience that is nowhere near as rewarding as that achieved by lacing together a fine piece of football genius in PES.

Another early criticism of the game regards the AI of the players, which is pretty basic. The arcade style means that players generally return to their formation rather than going with the flow of the action. It could be better though.

Still, ISS2 is fast, stupidly easy to pick up, and looks beautiful, so if you're looking for a soccer experience that's slick and goal-happy, but which lacks the intense skill levels required for PES, this may be a good substitute. More next month.

"Score a hat trick and then knock in another!"

The penalty set piece is well balanced



We never knew Chris Eubank played for Brazil

The power gauge system is a bit awkward

ISS2 basically looks a lot like PES

Owen rips one past the keeper and jogs off for a little celebration

Unleash a bullet from the box edge

CVG RECKONS

The fast arcade gameplay should appeal to fans who like their footie games uncomplicated and high-scoring. **Mike**

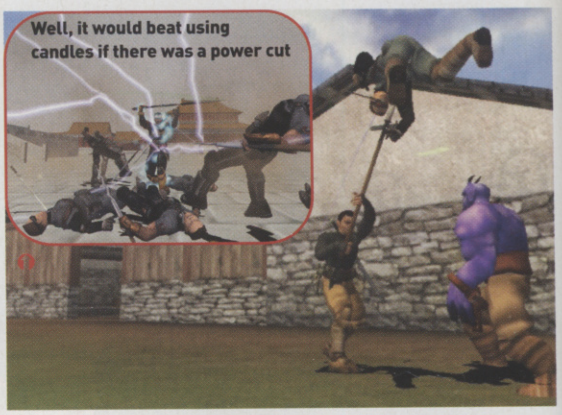
NEW LEGENDS

FORMAT: **XBOX** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **INFINITE MACHINE** PUBLISHER: **THQ**

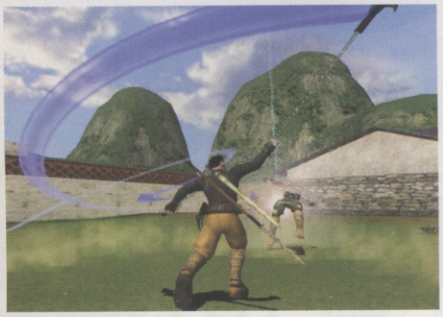
The closest we get to paying any kind of attention to antique oriental legends is when they crop up in late-night martial arts movies on Channel 5. So while the plot of New Legends means less to us than the untranslated bits of the menu at the local Chinese takeaway, the chance to run around with a set of super-sharp blades is not something we're about to turn down in a hurry.

Give it a few minutes and the game starts to fall into a comfortable pattern. You run around the levels, following an arrow to reach an objective. Meanwhile, you get to hack and slash your way through dozens of guards, soldiers and ninjas. However, in contrast to Dynasty Warriors 3, when you run into the middle of a massive street brawl the other characters actually participate in the combat, rather than just standing around admiring your moves.

Combat seems almost turn-based against some of the tougher guys



No one was impressed with the old levitating guard trick



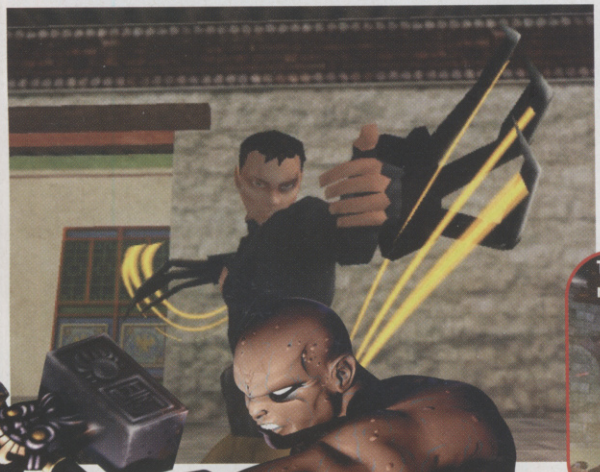
The novelty fist on a spring prop was always rewarded with a hearty laugh

Get up close and nasty if you want results

CHAOTIC COMBAT

Your objectives will range from getting to a given location to killing someone in cold blood or solving a basic puzzle. For example, you may have to find and disable the locking mechanism of a door in order to open up the next part of the level.

"Hack! Slash! Maim! Rest, then do it again"



These claws are great for ripping it up when you get close to people

Hmm, don't recall these in any oriental legends I've read

"One more move like that and you'll feel the edge of my sword"

The combat is freeform so different players will approach it in different ways. Some will like the range weapons – they're safe but ultimately wussy. There's plenty of fisticuffs if you really want to get your hands dirty – literally – and this highlights one cool feature in particular: when you beat someone to a pulp they usually drop their weapon, allowing you to pick it up and use it. Cool. This, coupled with your ability to attack with each hand individually, means you can set up just about any combination so you can personalise your arsenal to the way you play.

The real challenge for New Legends will be keeping the interest going – it will need plenty of varied but detailed levels if it's going to avoid the problems of DW3. With less reliance on eye candy and combat that feels like fighting rather than mindless button-mashing, we hope it'll be more chop than suey.

CVG RECKONS

We like the way you can change your weapons to suit any kind of battle, but it remains to be seen if there is enough depth to the missions and combat. Les

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TUROK: EVOLUTION

FORMAT: **PS2/GAMECUBE/XBOX** OUT: **SEPTEMBER** DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM** PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**

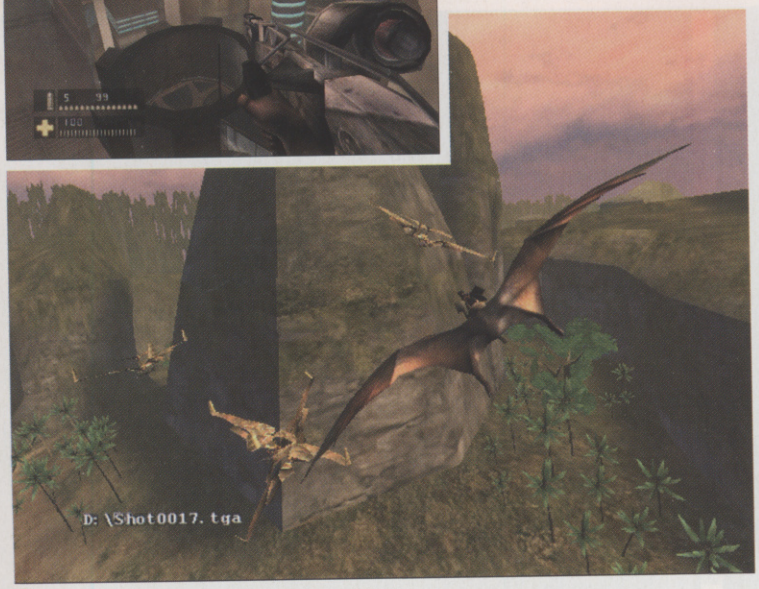
What could possibly be cooler than running around half-naked with a feather in your hair, slaying the odd giant lizard along the way? Apart from popping turtles out of their shells as Mario, not much.

Next-gen Turok on PS2, GameCube and Xbox is shaping up to be a mammoth first-person adventure, packed with bloody dino slaying mayhem, mammoth environments, and enormous tree-felling weapons.

Picture the scene: you're creeping through a misty jungle when a velociraptor appears and starts bounding towards you. But instead of legging it, you rapidly select your meatiest gun and unleash a blaze of fire at a nearby cluster of trees, then watch smugly as a giant palm tree trunk topples over and crushes the scaly beast to a pulp.

Keep low and out of sight, then shoot them both in the head. Blat, blat!

Take to the high ground with your sniper rifle and start popping heads



The environments are absolutely enormous

Y'see, you can bust up your surroundings and use natural objects, like trees and rocks, as killer implements. But you're also kitted out with some new and truly insane weapons, like the Gravity Disrupter Beam, Variable Payload Cruise Missiles and Swarm Bore. Sound cool? They are!

STUNNING STOMPING GROUNDS

Evolution is a prequel in the Turok series, and sees you take control of virtuous warrior-brave by the name of Tal'Set. You'll find yourself battling through a strong story-led adventure, exploring vast landscapes such as rainforests, dinosaur graveyards and rocky open plains.

There's some cool squad-based action to be had too, where you team up with like-minded folk and blast the crap out of reptilian swarms. And Acclaim is currently working on the AI of enemies and allies, developing the new Squad Dynamics System that's set to be pretty realistic.

But the burning question is, will the action be on a par with the likes of Halo? Well, from what CVG has seen so far, things are looking very promising all round for next gen Turok. Bring it on!

I'LL BRUISE YOU RIGHT!

As you can see, the stars of Turok: Evolution look mint, and most of them are tough enough to go ten rounds with a T-Rex. Don't mess!

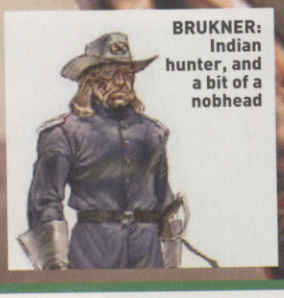
TAL'SET: Hard as nails Saquin warrior

DJUNN: World pie-eating champion

GREY BEAR: Chief of Saquin Indian tribe

TYRANNUS: Commander of the reptilian army

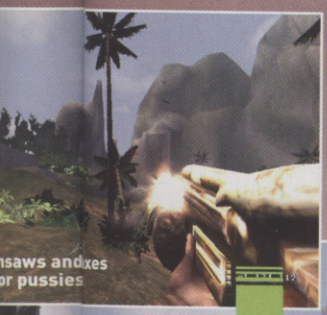
TARKEEN: A kick-ass sorcerer, Tal'Set's saviour


BRUKNER: Indian hunter, and a bit of a nobhead

MAYANA: Super-fit hunter and she's a healer too

LUMBERJACK ATTACK

I cut down trees, I wear high heels, suspenders and a bra... I wish I was a girlie, just like my dear Papa. Chopping down trees in Evolution is a riot, to be sure.



Let rip and make sure you stand well clear

Tree-felling is a habit that's very hard to kick

PUKE YOUR GUTS

Like all the previous Turok games, Evolution has its fair share of gore. Just check out these screens to see what horrible things you can do to your enemies.

And the chunder just keeps on coming. And coming

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS

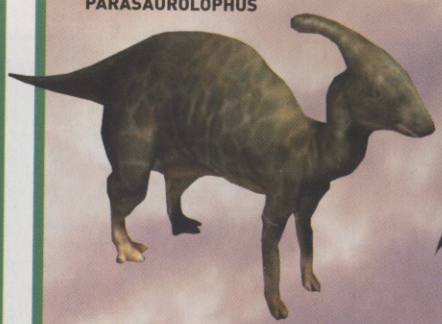
Shhh, be quite and don't move a single muscle or these tough-skinned prehistoric terrors will jump out of the page and bite your face off. Not really, they're just pictures of the stunning dinos that appear in Turok Evolution. Had you fooled there for a minute but you can relax.

ANKYLOSAURUS TANK

KRONOSAUR

COMPY

ANKYLOSAURUS


PARASAUROLOPHUS

PTERANODON

STYRACOSAURUS

VELOCIRAPTOR

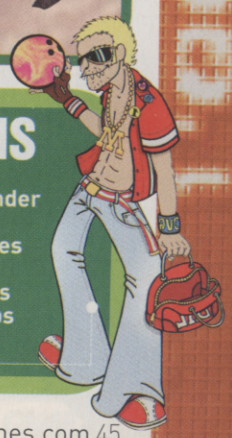
I'M LIKE A PTERANODON

Hop onto your big scaly bird, take the reins, and fly around Drakan-style

One of the biggest thrills of the Turok series has been riding wild dinos. Evolution doesn't disappoint: you can travel bare-back on a pteranodon, cruising the skies and journeying across vast areas of land in next to no time.

CVG RECKONS

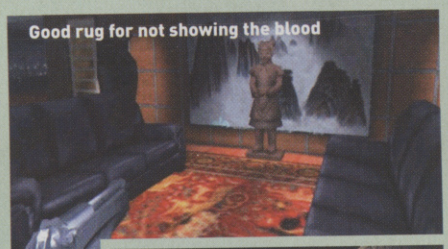
Squash velociraptors under trees, ride pteranodons bare-back, make enemies puke bile, and fire off enormous and ridiculous weapons till your thumbs bleed. We like! **Mike**

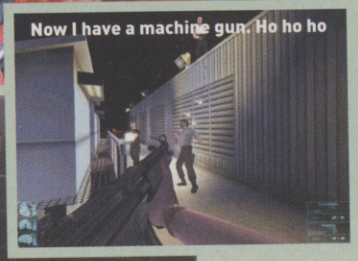


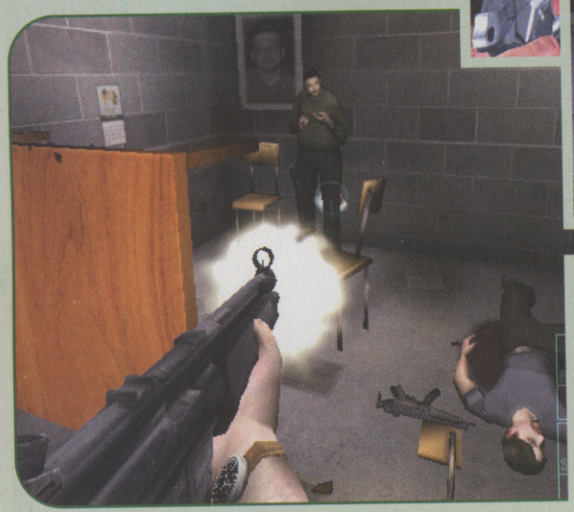
DIE HARD: NAKATOMI PLAZA

FORMAT: **PC** OUT: **LATE MARCH** DEVELOPER: **PIRANHA GAMES** PUBLISHER: **VIVENDI**

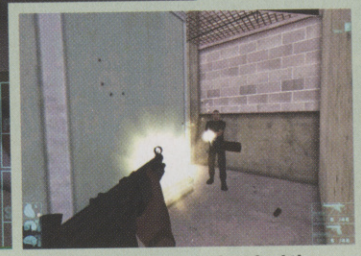
Adrenalin pumping, bullets pinging around your head as you desperately try to defuse explosives and save hostages, smart-arse one-liners and of course, the dirtiest vest in movie history. A first-person blast 100 per cent true to the first Die Hard movie is a recipe for non-stop action and while it doesn't beat the looks of rivals such as Medal Of Honor or Return To Castle Wolfenstein, the tight scripting and attention to detail can't be knocked.



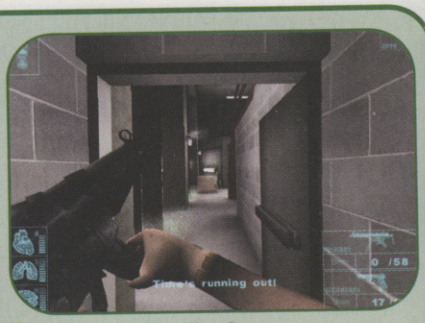




Think a table can save you, huh?



There'll be tears before bed time



Now where's that limo?

Morale plays a big part in the game, rising and falling, depending on how accurately you're shooting or how much the terrorists are kicking your ass all over the Nakatomi – this will affect how difficult the rest of game becomes. And AI, while not up to the standards of Allied Assault, is looking pretty good. When you enter a room, the terrorists roll out of the way, hide behind tables and poke their guns around corners in order to avoid Mr Cowboy. Now go and get that vest dirty. Yippee-ki-yay!

CVG RECKONS

Plenty of attention to detail, but Medal Of Honor has moved the goalposts and this could struggle to keep up. Rhianna

TAZ WANTED

FORMAT: **PS2/XBOX** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **BLITZ GAMES** PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**

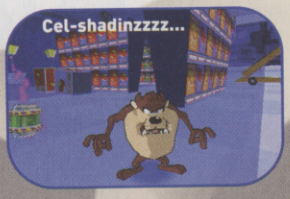
The cel-shading disease is spreading: even Taz has caught it. Cartoon licences mostly leave us with a feeling of dread, as they are usually cute to look at but feature levels of gameplay that wouldn't challenge a monkey.

Taz Wanted looks set to change all that with antics that will push your gaming abilities to the limit while making you laugh at the same time. Only the most tight-lipped could fail to smile at special attacks that include Taz whipping out a set of DJ decks to destroy everything in range, or making security guards moonwalk and rap till they drop.

Taz gets jiggy and breaks out his phat toons

Every level is packed with features and things to do – finding hidden items and destroying stuff Taz-style – so much so that the goal of collecting 'Wanted' posters is almost lost. Thankfully, among all the carnage the game is packed with funny touches that will keep you pushing to get further and see more.

Shock, horror. Taz Wanted may actually be a cartoon platformer that people with a mental age higher than their shoe size won't have to feel embarrassed about enjoying.



The Elephant Pong sub-game

Search for ways to cross the water

CVG RECKONS

Traditional platform action but with enough humour and mini-games to keep you going. And a multiplayer that develops the more you conquer in the single-player will add a lot of fun. Les

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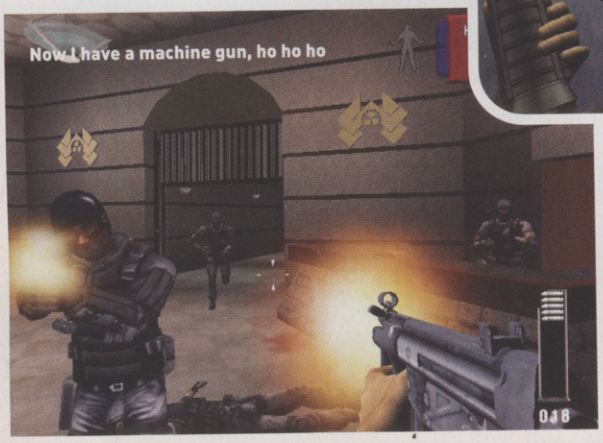
DIE HARD: VENDETTA

FORMAT: **GAMECUBE** OUT: **TBC** DEVELOPER: **BITS STUDIOS** PUBLISHER: **VIVENDI**

Set after the third movie, Die Hard combines all-out first-person action with stealth elements, so you'll be capturing terrorists and disarming gunmen rather than killing everything in sight.

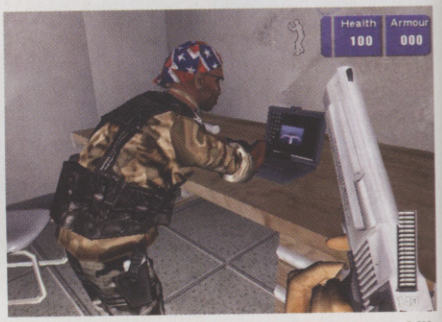
You'll also get involved in some cool team-based combat as you battle to prove that your dirty white vest makes you a whole lot harder than the bullet-proofed nancy boys you're fighting against.



Who let the dogs out? Well?

Two against one and you're low on ammo – even Brucey would struggle

Shush, let's have silence in the library, please



No time for a porn search, I got terrorists to kill

The Best Of The Rest

CVG gazes into its crystal ball and takes a look at the shape of things to come

Using magic kicks off an amazing visual effects show

Your party takes turns to beat the hell out of monsters

GRANDIA II

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **GAME ARTS** PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**

You see enemies coming so you can avoid them, unlike in Final Fantasy

Yeah, we know this has already been out on Dreamcast and PC, but it's a worthy addition to the PlayStation 2's ever strengthening ranks of adventure games and therefore worth a mention.

Grandia II may be lacking Final Fantasy's random battle action, but it contains more than enough non-stop combat, magic and puzzle-solving to suck you into the plot – which features a world threatened by battling rival religions. The game's easy to control and should appeal to hardcore fans and novices alike.

Level up your characters and all hell breaks loose in combat

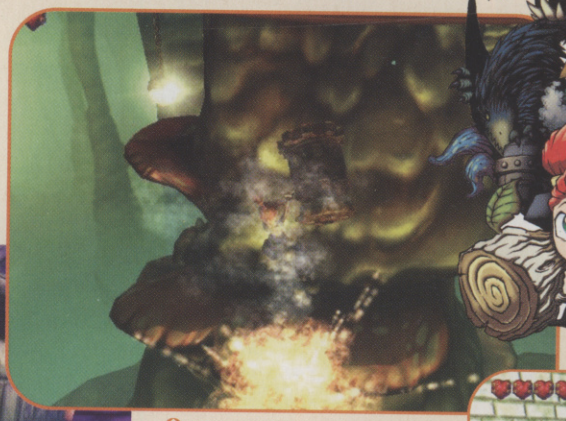
The dungeons that link the towns are crowded and ripe for a fight

MALICE

FORMAT: **PS2/XBOX** OUT: **AUTUMN** DEVELOPER: **ARGONAUT** PUBLISHER: **VIVENDI**

Lara Croft may have the glamour end of the videogame market sewn up. However, a young girl, a massive hammer and 22 huge 3D levels of pure platform adventure might give her a surprising run for her money when Malice is unleashed late this year. It remains to be seen whether cute and cartoony is preferable to Lara's 'real world' assets.

You'd get well and truly moaned at for seal clubbing, but if the animal is ugly it's okay. Apparently



You could kick and punch, but weapons are more effective

Check out Malice's flaming hammer of pain

Eww, watch where you're going or you might step in something sticky and smelly

TEST DRIVE OVERDRIVE

XBOX **APRIL** INFOGRAMES

Likely to be overshadowed by Project Gotham as it's not quite as good-looking, but this does offer more variety.

The UK version *isn't* getting a carjacking mode

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX

XBOX **APRIL** VIVENDI

The mad Bandicoot's no longer exclusive to Sony. More sharp-looking 3D platform action.

Crash comes over all fruity for Xbox

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2

PC **MAY** VIVENDI

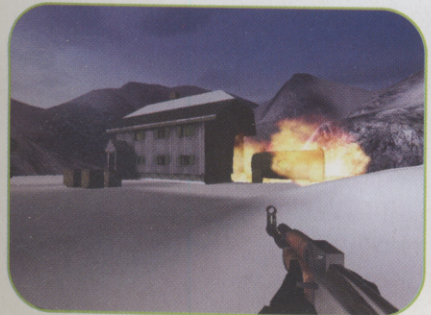
Another instalment of James Bond-meets-Austin Powers secret agent gameplay in this first-person blast.

Poor bloke was only nipping off for a pee

IGI2: COVERT STRIKE

PC **JUNE** CODEMASTERS

Hacking computers, beating up guards, stealing military secrets and blowing stuff up, stealth-based first-person IGI is back in style.



Very stealthy. That won't get anyone's attention

LARGO WINCH

PS2 **SEPTEMBER** UBISOFT

Based on a hit French comic book series, you assume the role of a billionaire businessman in this action adventure.

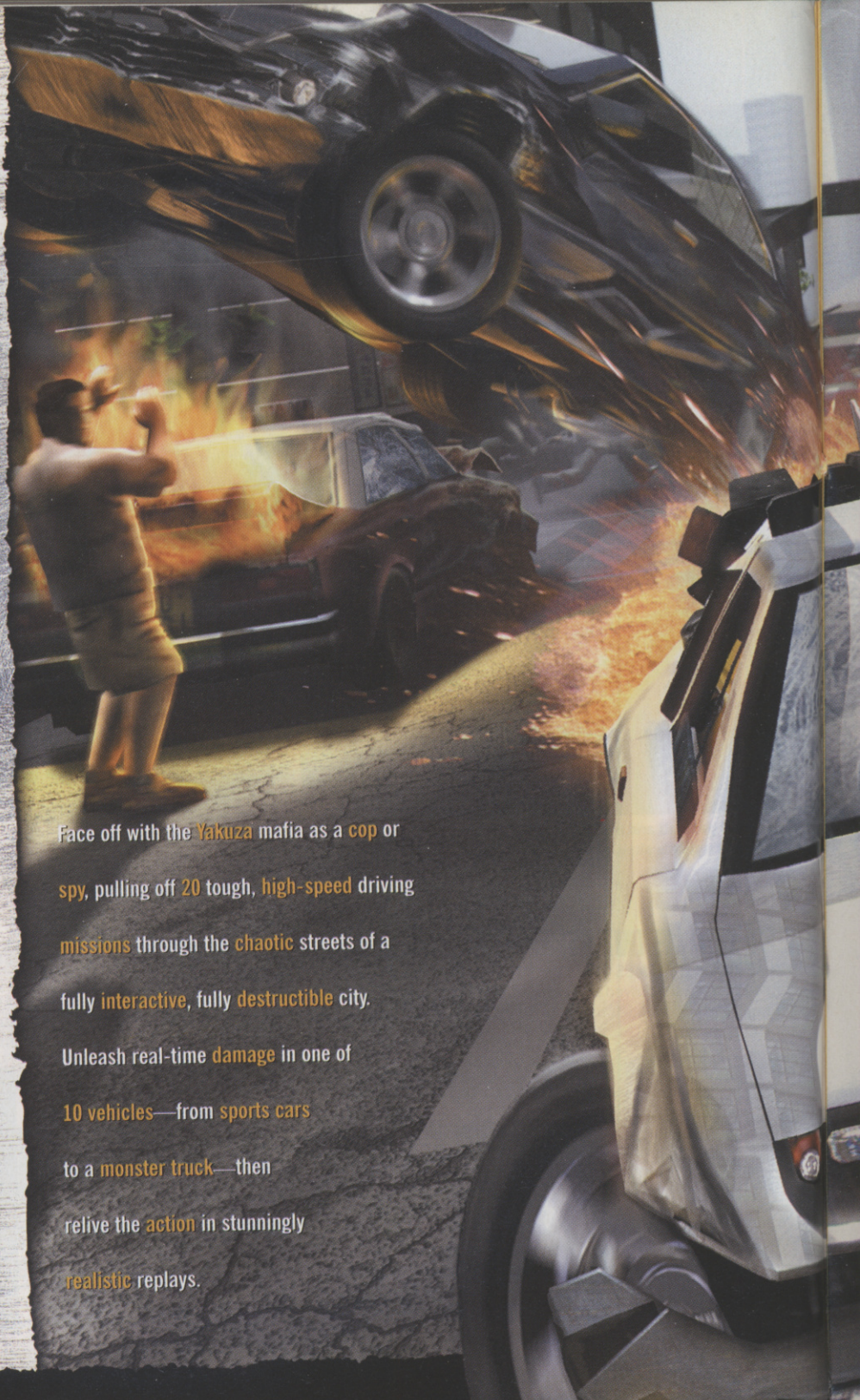
Shame there's no rooftop footy pitch

TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONES

GAMECUBE **JUNE** VIRGIN

An impressive-looking game, but let's hope they take the criticisms levelled at the PlayStation 2 version on board.

Your bank will regret refusing you that overdraft



Face off with the Yakuza mafia as a cop or spy, pulling off 20 tough, high-speed driving missions through the chaotic streets of a fully interactive, fully destructible city. Unleash real-time damage in one of 10 vehicles—from sports cars to a monster truck—then relive the action in stunningly realistic replays.

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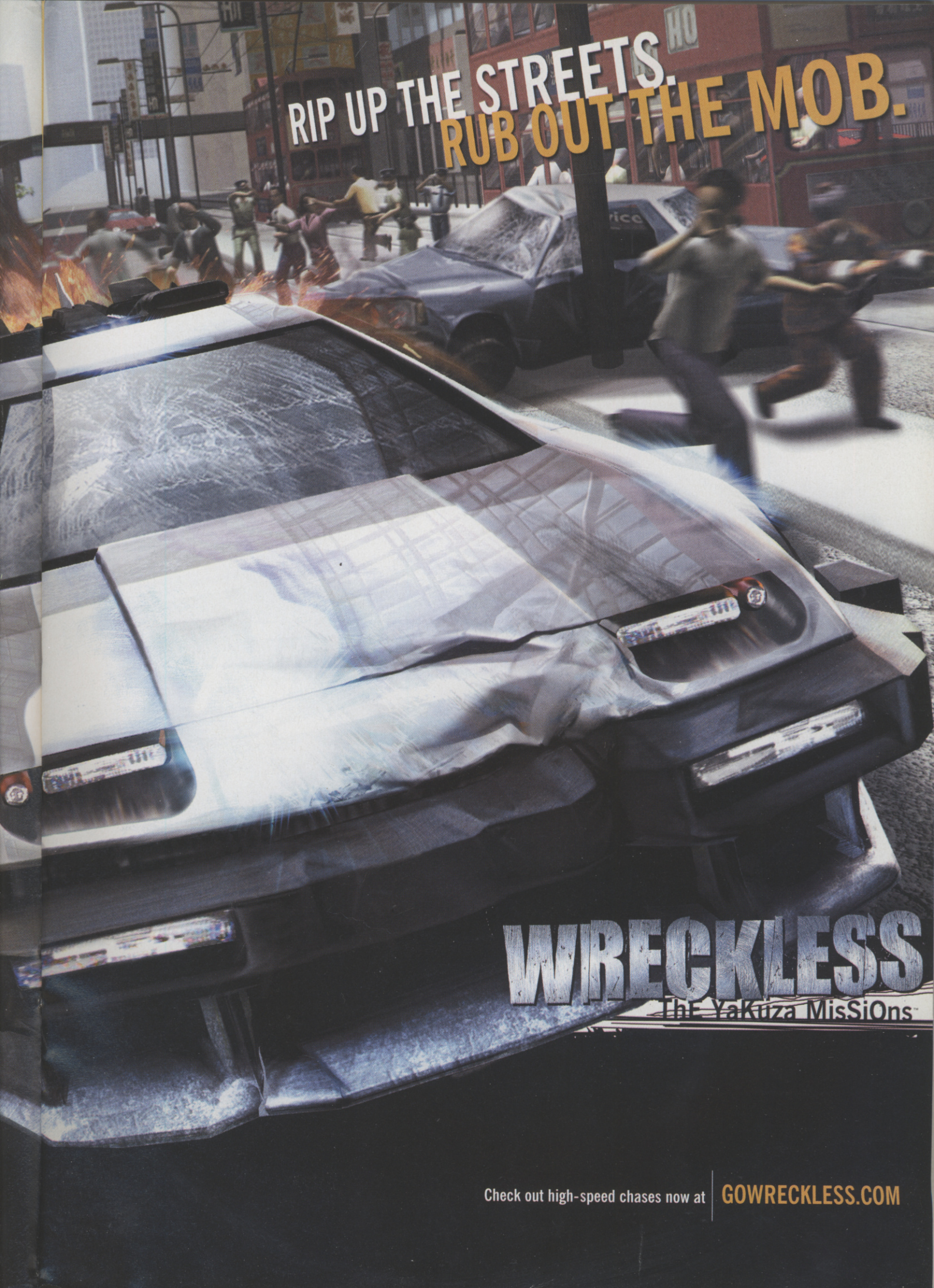
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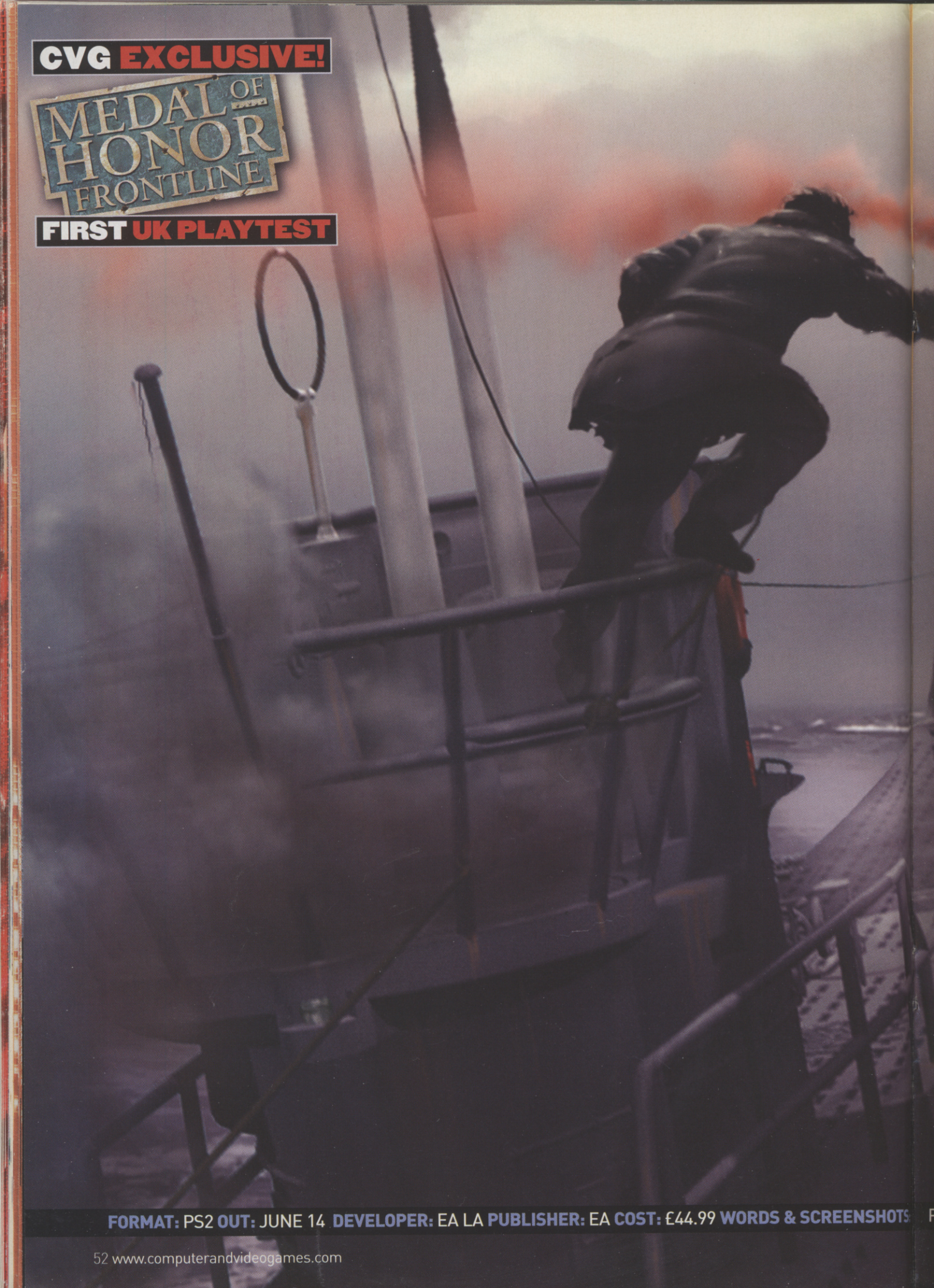


FORMAT: PS2 **OUT:** JUNE 14 **DEVELOPER:** EA LA **PUBLISHER:** EA **COST:** £44.99 **WORDS & SCREENSHOTS**

LOCKED 'N' FULLY LOADED

Stop snivelling, you tree-hugging maggots. Anyone with a PS2 will be proud to do a tour of the shooter Frontline

Seems like only yesterday that we were regaling you with our fave war stories, how we led the storming of the Normandy beaches, almost single-handedly saved the world from the Nazi threat in a blaze of glory, and then caught something unspeakable while 'taking cover' in CVG Company's latrines (all true, of course). Actually, it *was* only yesterday.

Indeed, as you read this, Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault is no doubt still blowing away the sales charts with its mouse-melting mixture of exceptional AI, gorgeous graphics and war zones that are so alive you can almost feel the dusty grit from Nazi shells between your teeth. The meat-grinder Omaha Beach mission alone has propelled Allied Assault into near legendary gaming status. So it's a bit of a bitch that a series popularised on PSone has spawned a benchmark shooter game – available just for PC.

GAME ON

Only, it seems the Second World War isn't over quite yet for videogames. PlayStation 2 is fighting back with its very own Medal Of Honor uber shooter, which is already threatening to do an Allied Assault and set a new standard for console shooters.

You want gutted, smoking cities gripped by massive battles, with heavy machine-guns and tanks scything down waves of Allied and Axis grunts, while planes rain down death from above, and you just a wee cog in a big war machine? You got it in spades right here, soldier.

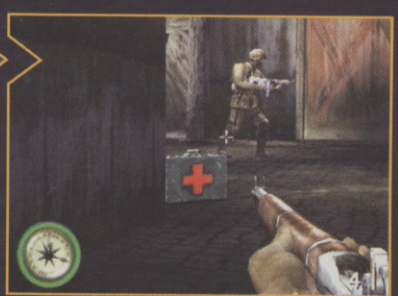
Dammit, Medal Of Honor Frontline even has its own Normandy landing missions. Bet *that* got your attention. So fall in, Private, 'cos Sergeant CVG's taking you on an exclusive tour of the Frontline...

SHARP MIND, SMOOTH MOVES

Your buddy uses the corner for cover. No one wants to run blindly into a trap

He's alive enough to clutch his wounded shoulder – so plug him again, quick

When under heavy fire, other GIs do the sensible thing and hit the dirt...



...but they're no pussies and aren't afraid to launch attacks on enemy positions either

Seconds into the game, you'll see your first evidence of what's shaping up to be some pretty damn smooth AI, and animations that'll have you grinning gormlessly, mumbling, "Did you see that?!".

Nazi foot soldiers use cover intelligently, ducking around corners, lying down to present themselves as a smaller target, sometimes falling back, sometimes just sticking their guns above parapets to avoid you shooting their helmets and then their heads off. We actually saw one guy kick our own grenade back at us!

Your own guys ain't no slouches either and can slide into cover – on different occasions we witnessed both Nazis and marines occupy fixed gun nests and, though they'd only just arrived and were armed with their own guns, use the fixed weapons on advancing enemies.

Shoot someone in the leg and they might hop, in the hand and they shake it madly. The death animations are utterly convincing too. Sometimes a high velocity impact will knock a Nazi to the floor, only for him to get back up. Plug him again, and he arches his back in his death throes. Very cool.

OTS: PETE WALKER

MISSION POSSIBLE

First thing you'll notice is that the main menu is the same as Allied Assault's, but that's where the direct lifting stops. Each of Frontline's 20 or so missions begins with a briefing, breaking down the main objectives you must meet to progress on to the following mission. There are usually several diverse objectives, and the pace can vary enormously from the fully gung-ho to sneak-up-behind-and-pistol-whip-them stealth.

The missions, which timeline-wise are set part-way through the original MoH game, are broken down into mini campaigns made up of a handful of levels. Success in the initial Uboat missions sees you move into Holland to find a missing informant, then on to the famous Nijmegen Bridge to save if for advancing Allied troops. Next you're donning a disguise in Emmerich, Germany, ultimately aiming to nick a secret German H0-IX plane that threatens to turn the tide of the war back in Germany's favour.

You pull on the combat boots of Lieutenant turned special operative Jimmy Patterson, the hero of that first PSone epic. Your first mission in the port of St Mathieu seems straight forward enough – stow away aboard a sub bound for the German Uboat base at Lorient. But the full-scale battle going off around you in St Mathieu helps create what's shaping up to be one of the finest opening shooter missions we've ever seen on a console.

SEAT-OF-PANTS STUFF

The game has barely started when a jeep laden with GIs hurtles by, immediately followed by a diving fighter plane. As you leg it to catch them up, you turn a corner and watch the jeep being blown apart.

Suddenly, you're in the thick of a firefight between advancing marines and defending Wermacht landser. You've got a rifle and grenades, but the mounted heavy machine-gun on the back of that wrecked jeep looks tempting... About 30 seconds into the game and you're gleefully firing streams of white-hot lead into Jerry at about a billion miles an hour. Sweet!

A couple of minutes later, you're engaged in vicious street fighting alongside surviving marines, with hordes of Germans ducking out of alleys, desperate to pin the Allies down in this part of the city. Occasional stray bombs pepper the rubble-strewn streets and smoking ruins, adding to the feeling of a city under siege.

Sneaking through back alleys, you stumble into an awesome set piece –

Holy shi...! But the bombs bounce off that tank

St Mathieu is a city under siege. The house-to-house fighting is brutal. Protect your buddies, you need 'em

NORMANDY LANDINGS

Oh yes, it's in there. We're not going to spoil it by letting on too much, but here are the first few moments to set the scene.

Imagine the vomiting marines as the rocking landing craft pick their way between columns kicked up by shelling German defenders. You look left – more landing craft, more churned up water, Allied planes overhead. More shells are tearing up the beach.

It's sheer carnage. The front ramp of your craft goes down. You've seen Saving Private Ryan. You've got a bad feeling about this...

Trust us when we say that you'll have died *a lot* before getting this far

Here we go boys. You're free to look around at the carnage as you head for the beach

You struggle out of the water...

Nazis beat back an attempt on the bridge by your buddies

Now it's your turn. You've made it over the bridge, but there's the tank...

marines trying to take a bridge defended by machine-gun nests and a panzer. Planes try to bomb the tank, bullets and shells fly everywhere, and you dive for cover behind a civvie car or sandbags, while marines try to lay down suppressing fire. The Mark III tank's relentless fire sometimes even blows apart boxes that seemed like excellent cover for storming the bridge.

WHAT DO I DO? WHAT DO I DO?

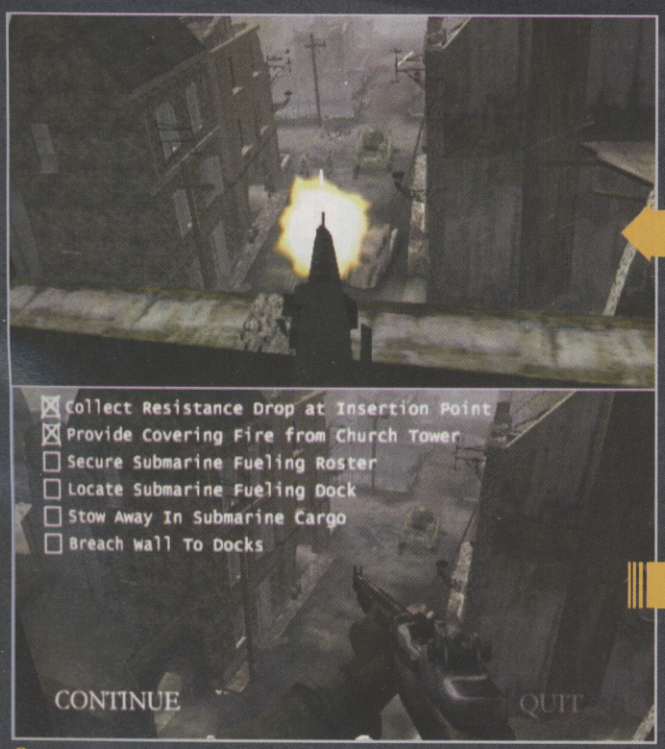
This scenario feels alive, like there really is a massive scrap going off all around you, and it's your moment to play hero. Is this the time to practise long-distance grenade-throwing? You could try picking off the support troops before barrelling across and tackling the tank closer up, but then the guy in the fixed machine-gun nest might start peppering your khakis with lead. Oh, and the tank blows up in stages so it's possible to immobilise it without taking out the turret. The choice is yours, but we played it through several times and it was different each time, depending on how we tackled it.

And to add to that chaotic war feeling, when you've finally seized the area, it's retaken by Germans. You have to climb a wrecked church tower and man a heavy machine-gun to break up the Nazi counter-offensive, before street fighting your way to where the sub is moored.

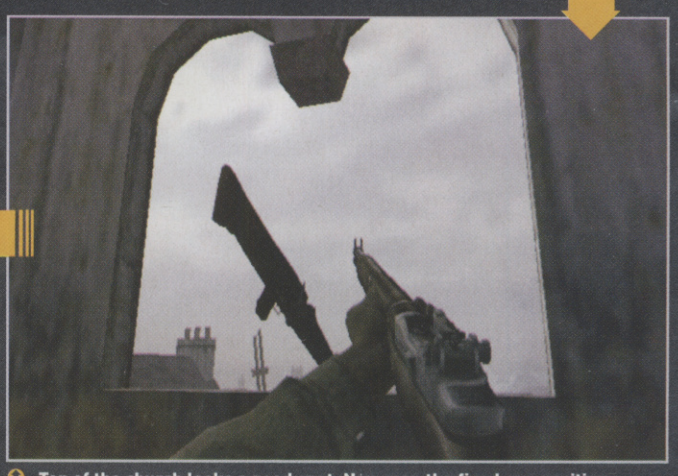
How fast you tackle each scenario is important later in that first mission – when we advanced quicker, we arrived early enough to take down a Nazi machine-gun nest and save a party of marines from an ambush. There were other nice touches too that'll make you want to replay this mission several times – one time we crawled into a shelled room to find a Nazi thug standing over a dead marine. Another time we were just about quick enough to hear him being tortured (but not quite quick enough to save the poor blighter).

It spins around to get a better bead on you...

Later, you've got a counter-attack to quash



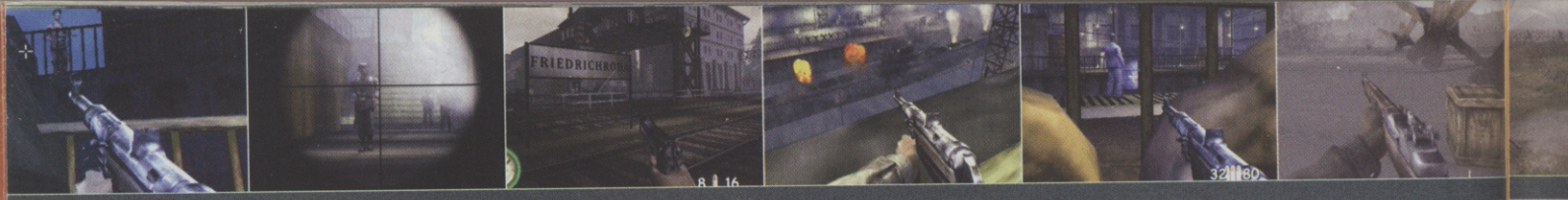
Tear them to pieces, Nazi scum! Yes! Time now to check mission objectives



Top of the church looks a good spot. Now man the fixed gun position...

Move quick and you stop this trap

Wonder where the docks are... ?

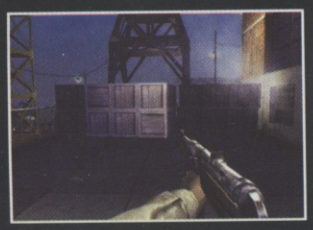


IT'S IN THE GAME

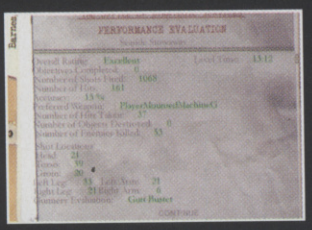
You don't have to wait long before you get a taste of some of the sweet features packed into Frontline. Fixed gun positions are strategically located and, if you've had to be careful with ammo for your usual weapons, it's great to just let rip – these mothers never run out of juice!

But fun as they are, Medal Of Honor veterans will know they've been a fixture in the series since its PSone days. No, what really stands out straight away is the feeling that you actually are in a war zone, with various scripted moments like planes flying overhead, bombs dropping, and platoons of fellow GIs fighting shoulder to shoulder with you in the atmospheric ruins – something that the humble PSone just couldn't handle.

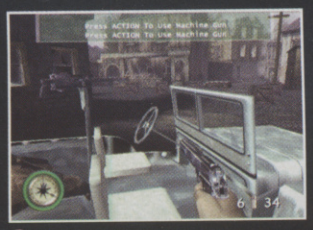
Those fellow Yanks aren't just eye candy either. Keep 'em alive long enough, and they'll prove really useful in the more hectic firefights – so much so that you soon feel part of a team rather than just a one-man army. Of course, many of the later missions are more in the You vs World mould, but it seems no mistake that the game starts and finishes with full-on, utterly immersive war zones packed with marines. Here's some more features...



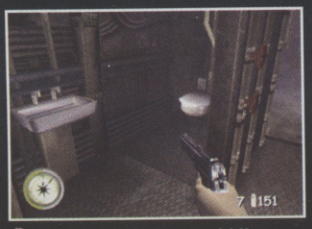
Crates block your progress



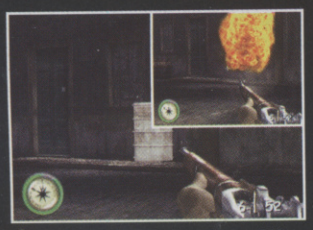
Not bad, now re-do the level



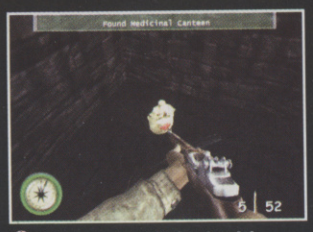
You get on-screen hints



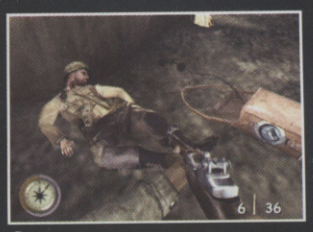
That's where he was hiding



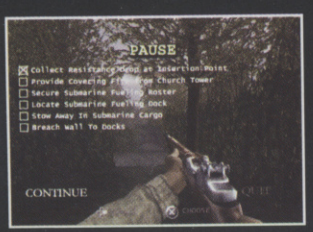
Wonder if this goes boom? Yup



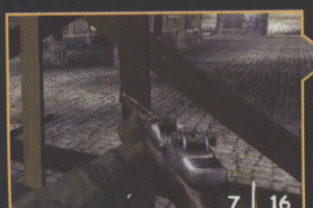
Explore for hidden health



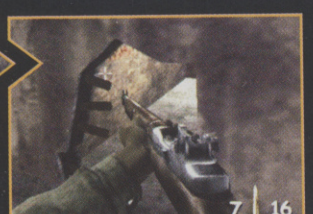
Too late for you, buddy



Missions have several objectives



Damn, can't get through here



So look for alternative routes

BAZOOKAS TO B.A.R.s

Frontline's weapons are the real deal and you'll marvel at the authenticity. Not only are the gun models pretty much spot on, but their rate of fire and reload seems utterly realistic, down to the noises the ammunition clips make as they're thrust home.

No surprise then that some of the development team made recordings of the real weapons firing to ensure their videogame counterparts were spot on.

If that doesn't add up to a hill of beans to you, then don't worry. It's enough to know that they feel great between your hands when you're pounding away thanks to a little Dual Shock magic, and that if you find yourself standing opposite some Nazi soldat, both frantically reloading for what seems like ages, that there's a damn good reason for it.

AWESOME ARSENAL

There are weapons for all occasions. Some, like the shotgun, have a wide spread of damage or fast rate of fire and shoot comfortably from the hip.

But if you absolutely, positively HAVE to take 'em down in numbers and fast, then you've got grenades. They're a simple matter of the longer you hold Fire (R1) before releasing, the further you throw them. How we laughed at each other when we blew ourselves up for the twentieth time after accidentally dropping a pineapple at our feet. But it's worth persevering with.

Holding the L1 button gives you a slight zoom on any gun as well as an aiming reticule, which you'll be truly grateful for when ducking round corners and snapping shots off at massed enemies in cover. But for true sniping accuracy on the Springfield rifle, you get a fully zoomable sight.

Word of warning though. If you think you'll cruise the rest of the level every time you pick up a machine-gun, you're wrong. Ammo is finite (except for fixed gun positions), so you'll need to be accurate and conserve ammo. Sometimes you'll end up left with nothing but the pistol whip.

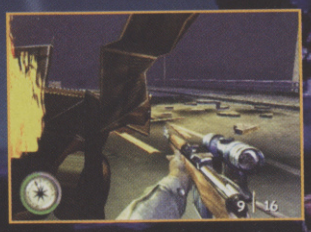
REAL REGULATIONS

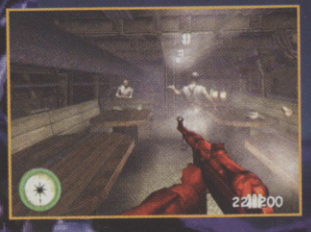
EA LA is going to great pains to deliver as authentic a gaming experience as would be fun to play. So, not only are missions based on real-life operations from WWII, weapons modelled to look and sound real and troops animated to hold their rifles correctly in every position, but the development teams even took part in field training to gain a better understanding of tactics.

For added authenticity, they roped in experts on the real HO-IX plane, and that MoH series stalwart technical advisor, Captain Dye. We've met him and take it from us, if he thinks tactics are arse-over-tit, he'll tell them about it straight.

SHE'S GOT THE LOOK

You don't need us to tell you that Frontline ain't no ugly sister...

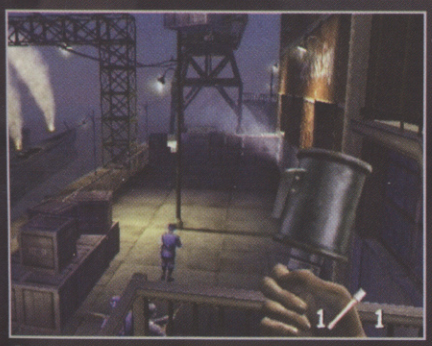




The shotgun – deadly up close. Aim clever and you can save ammo with two-for-one kills

Get too close and they'll try reshaping your nose with their rifle butts or even their fists

Browning Automatic Rifles (B.A.R.), Bazookas, sniper rifles – they're all in here

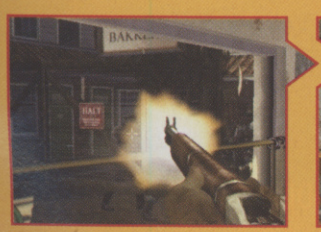


That grenade ain't standard US Army issue, but is does much the same job

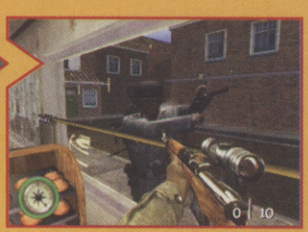
The smoke from your muzzle lingers a moment after the shot's been fired. Nice touch

He might look like a wuss in his red hat, but before you can laugh chef drills you with knives

Even the reload animations are bang-on. Faster, soldier



Bakery windows smash...



...that's what you call a bun fight

Vintage footage sets the scene

No blood, just lots of swastikas

MOVE IT, YOU SLUG!

Console shooter veterans will be right at home with the default control set-up. Since the game's not out until June, EA may also be planning to let you configure the pad yourself, but we were running, looking around the battleground and plugging Nazis between the eyes in a matter of minutes. Here's how it looks though:

CUBIX

ROBOTS FOR EVERYONE

BUILD A BOT

COMPETITION

1ST PRIZE

SEE YOUR BOT IN THE NEXT CUBIX SERIES

PLUS **LOADS OF GREAT RUNNERS UP PRIZES***

*prizes split between 3 age categories

THREE EASY STEPS

1 - NAME YOUR ROBOT 2 - WHAT DOES YOUR ROBOT DO? 3 - DRAW A PICTURE OR DESCRIBE YOUR ROBOT

All entries to include name, age and full address and sent in a stamped addressed envelope to: **'Build a Bot' competition, Cartoon Network, PO Box 2798, London W1A 5LE**
Closing date for all entries is 15th April 2002. Competition open to residents of the UK only. For full list of terms and conditions visit www.cartoonnetwork.co.uk or toon text page 240.

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CUBIX ROBOTS FOR EVERYONE CLASH 'N BASH

CUBIX ROBOTS FOR EVERYONE RACE 'N ROBOTS

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3DO™ Computer games releasing March 2002

PC CD ROM

GAME BOY COLOR

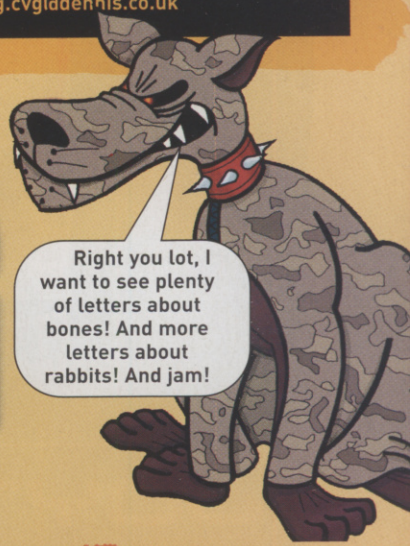
GAME BOY ADVANCE

FREEPLAY

SPEW YOUR GUTS

Freeplay has undergone minor cosmetic surgery over the past couple of months – some of the old fat has been sucked out and replaced with even more of your letters. And now a bridge has been built between CVG mag and cvg.com too, meaning you can go to our website and rant away on the forum and your pearls of wisdom may well end up in print here! So, go online or use carrier pigeon. 'Sup to you.

Do you want your 15 minutes of fame in CVG's Freeplay? Then get your high scores, challenges and opinions to us right now! Write to us at: Freeplay, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD. Or email us at: mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

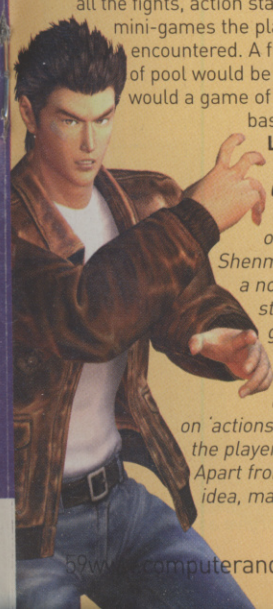


HUNTER'S MAILBAG

Don't keep your opinions to yourselves – write to us! Go on, have a good old rant

SHENMUE

I have an idea for the next Shenmue: a non-linear story-driven game. At certain key points in the main game, Ryo's quest can branch depending on the actions or decisions the player makes. Each branch will lead the player into discovering new events, set pieces and action stages. On completion of the game a DVD-style title screen will be open at the start, from where you can access all the major cutscenes and replay all the fights, action stages and mini-games the player encountered. A full game of pool would be nice, as would a game of street court basketball.
L Brookes

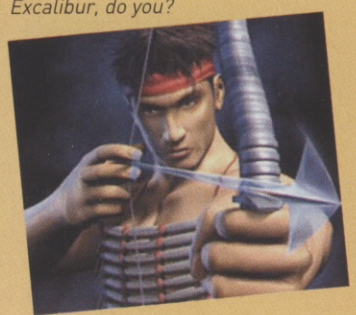


CVG: *Okay, 'L', but hang on, isn't Shenmue already a non-linear story-driven game? And doesn't stuff happen depending on 'actions or decisions the player makes'? Apart from that, great idea, mate!*

CACA-POO-POO-WEE-WEE

I hate how people say the GameCube is so kiddy. It might look it from the outside, but some games are certainly NOT kiddy. If people think Resident Evil, Eternal Darkness, Perfect Dark Zero and Turok Evolution are babyish then they are very strange.
Paddy Douglas

CVG: *A good game is a good game like a good film is a good film, kiddy or not. What would you rather see, the 'kiddy' Toy Story 2 or the 'adult' Battlefield Earth? And would you rather play Mario 64 or Excalibur? See, you don't even remember Excalibur, do you?*



CHART

CVG

What's turning us on

1	**MOH Frontline (PS2)**	"Looks as good as Allied Assault but you don't need a £1000 PC" (Alex)
2	**Resident Evil (GameCube)**	"Ripping heads off never looked so good as in this game" (Les)
3	**Pikmin (Gamecube)**	"Miyamoto paves the way forward – yet again" (Mike)
4	**Final Fantasy X (PS2)**	"Beautiful to look at, but what's with the random battles?" (Pete)
5	**Advance Wars (GBA)**	"Endlessly entertaining and adictive. A masterpiece" (Mike)

DESIGNER THREADS

Playing computer games helped me go to university because I want to become a games designer. Those people who think computer games are a waste of time are those people who cannot play them. I bet the majority of your readers all want to make games. All I say is, 'Go for it'.
Rafiq Miah, Birmingham

CVG: *Yeah, good point, make sure you go for it, Rafiq. CVG will be right behind you.*

CENSORED!

The letters we DIDN'T print

WHAT: A funny one written in German, but actually sent from Croydon
WHY: The handwriting was truly abysmal

WHAT: One from DaRKWOLF
WHY: Because he always goes on about the CORRECT way to write DaRKWOLF

WHAT: One from 'Mr D'
WHY: Because it was Darkwolf in disguise

WHAT: Loads from a guy calling himself 'Spider' Webb
WHY: An irrational prejudice

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GOLDEN BONE

NO SWEAT

I bought a PlayStation 2 rather than an Xbox or GameCube because it was the only console out at the time and still is, and I felt it had by far the best choice of games. The one minor problem with it is the joysticks; while all of the other buttons are fine, the joysticks are slightly too low and too close together. So I've a great idea for a peripheral. It allows you to use a GameCube controller (which is the best of the three consoles' controllers) on your PlayStation 2. In the battle against sweat, the GameCube controller is in a league of its own, because of the fantastic two circles on the joystick which it borrowed from the N64. So when you get to a tough part of a game and start to sweat, you won't have the problem of the joysticks slipping, which is a problem with the PlayStation 2's controller.

I hope that a third-party company will see this letter and take inspiration from it, and will consider providing PlayStation 2 owners with the choice of buying an improved controller.

Thomas, Sudbury

Playing your PS2: very hard work

Thanks for this, Thomas. You get this month's Golden Bone because the vivid mental image of you sitting there, sweat pouring off your hands, all thanks to the PlayStation 2 controller's inferior design, well Thomas, it had us in fits, to be quite honest.

JOYTECH®

To quote Saint Dale Of Winton, "Points mean prizes". And indeed now they do in CVG too. From this issue forward, your points of view can blag you free gear. We've teamed up with those purveyors of fine add-ons at JOYTECH to offer each month's Golden Bone Letter writer a free bundle of quality peripherals. If the GBA goodies below don't grab you, we've even got bundles for PSone and PS2. Just make sure you mark your name and address clearly, y'hear.

DAVE PONSFORD SPECIAL

HE'S THE LETTER-WRITING DADDY! OH YES HE IS!

Dave Ponsford loves to write to CVG. This month he sent us FIVE letters, over 700 words-worth in all. Here's a heftily shortened taste of Dave's words of wisdom...

I get your mag every month and enjoy it. I'm disabled and spend a lot of time reading different magazines while I await my Xbox.

Dave Ponsford

A nice start from Dave. We learn that he's disabled, and that he likes the mag. Cool.

So Sony has confirmed the release of the PS3 is to be brought forward. They let it slip weeks after the European launch that they are working on a PS3.

Dave Ponsford

We also discover that Dave gets his info from dodgy sources. Sony has confirmed no such thing, Davey boy!

The best console in the world is the Xbox! This is a simple fact.

Dave Ponsford

Heads up, he's an Xbox fan! Now that IS a fact.

Well done Big N, £150 and 20 games it's almost worth the wait. This is a huge blow to Sony who dropped the PS2 price to £199 to compete with Nintendo. It's also great news because I can now afford to get one to go alongside my Xbox that I've pre-ordered.

Dave Ponsford, Doncaster

But wait! He likes Nintendo, too. What's more, we now know that Dave lives in Doncaster and plans to get a GameCube as well as an Xbox...

I'm lucky enough now to be able to buy a GameCube as well as my Xbox (which has been on order since Xmas). My son has a PS2, and with most games going multi-format I feel that you should now begin to reflect this in reviews.

Dave Ponsford (Xbox fan who has a small place in my heart for Big N)
Anti-Sony club. S Yorks

Wow. We have now learned that Dave has a son, and that Doncaster is in South Yorkshire, but what's this? Dave's already criticising his favourite games mag. How dare he?

HE'S RIGHT YOU KNOW

I hate letters that ramble on about which console is best. Get it into your heads, fools. People want to buy a console without being poisoned by your ridiculous verbal crap about which console is best. TRUE gamers like me buy any console if it has good games. Keep your thoughts in your heads, you prats.

Paul J Weston

Paul may not be winning awards for good manners or diplomacy skills with this letter, but the geezer does have a point. Read on and you'll see what we mean...

SCREAM IF YOU WANT IT TO STOP!

I've been following the debate regarding which is the best next-gen console to buy for well over a year now. Personally, being a fan of Final Fantasy and RPG games in general, there's no contest – it's gotta be the PS2. I know the Sony console has been at the sharp end of some slagging off lately, but which other next-gen console can boast a decent role-player? None! As it is, I'm looking forward to playing Final Fantasy L on the PlayStation 10. When the dust settles a bit, I think that SCEE will rule the roost over Microsoft and the 'Cube looks too much like a kids' toy for serious gamers to pay any real attention to.

Tony Brookes, Mansfield

CVG: *But only you can decide which console suits you best. Check out our feature on page 24 to help you choose.*

CHART BEST EVER

Off-line multiplayer games

1	GoldenEye (N64)
2	Pro Evolution Soccer (PS2)
3	MOH Allied Assault (PC)
4	Halo (XBOX)
5	Mario Kart 64 (N64)
6	Virtua Tennis (DC)
7	Saturn Bomberman (SATURN)
8	Virtua Fighter 4 (PS2)
9	RTC Wolfenstein (PC)
10	Micro Machines V3 (PSONE)

ACHTUNG!

Just how damn amazing would it be if Konami set the next Metal Gear game in WWII? I mean, is it just me or do WWII games just have that special touch of class?

Ross Silifant

CVG: *Dunno. The US dropped two atomic bombs on Japan at the end of WWII. If we were Japanese – as Konami is – we'd be kind of reluctant to make a game based on it. On the other hand, forgive and forget, eh?*

GEORGE THE FIRST PERSON

I can't stand footy games. A load of blokes running left and right or up and down the screen. Boring. Don't get me wrong – I enjoy a good multiplayer game, but football games still feel restricted, and the single-player experience is crap. But why does it have to be like this? Being a fan of UT and Quake III, I know how thrilling a good FPS can be. Why not combine the benefits of two potentially great genres to form a new concept: first-person footy

games. I don't recall ever seeing such a game. Maybe that's because consoles and PCs weren't capable of it before, but surely now it can be done with the huge graphical advances made recently? Imagine it: standing in the centre of a huge stadium, looking around in awe. As the whistle blows, you take the ball up the field, actually being able to turn your head and see your team-mates backing you up, or the opposition coming towards you. Using a first-person viewpoint would surely make footy games so much more appealing, exciting, and, most importantly, realistic.
George Wilkins

CVG: *Thanks, George, let's put it to the office 'ideas board'. Alex: "No way. It would be too confusing. Why would you want to play as one player?" Les: "It's been tried. Doesn't work." Jenny: "What is football?"*

SHORT STUFF

Are there any Dreamcast games you want to donate to me, please?
Tom Kemp

CVG: *No, Tom, there aren't*

Can you tell Dan to stop blowing off? I just can't concentrate over here.
Jenny, CVG

Tell Jenny no – I've got terrible wind.
Dan, CVG

Christ Dan, what on earth have you been eating this time?
Alex, CVG

CHART

CVG GURU

Dan Payne's best ever games

1	Mario Kart (GBA)
2	Quake III Arena (PC)
3	Super Mario 64 (N64)
4	Space Harrier (Arcade)
5	Bomberman Tournament (GBA)
6	Pro Evolution Soccer (PS2)
7	Metal Gear Solid 2 (PS2)
8	Halo (Xbox)
9	RTC Wolfenstein (PC)
10	Unreal Tournament (PC)

CVG STINKERS

THE MOST DEPRESSING LETTER EVER!

I have been a keen gaming fan ever since I started buying CVG in 1991, but lately I've begun to get the feeling that it's just not worth it. Admittedly, it's probably mostly influenced by the terrible events of last year. I want to escape reality by playing games, not be reminded of it. [wibbles glumly on about games like Counter Strike and Command & Conquer...].

I know that there are plenty of new consoles coming out, but it's hard to get excited about them really. [Although this isn't saying much as I missed out on the whole PlayStation revolution as I was still playing my Sega Mega Drive.]

Another thing which is discouraging is that the games seem to be getting more and more unimaginative. Game companies have to make money, but there's a difference between producing interesting games (Sega, Rare) and being a milking shed for cash cows (EA, Core). As I am currently only receiving a pitiful salary, I have to make a choice each month whether to spend what I can spare on games or rock 'n' roll. I'm sorry to say that it's been the latter for a long time now.
Anonymous

The sky has darkened; a slow, sad rain falls; the streetlights fail to penetrate the unremitting gloom. Thank you, Morrissey, for those uplifting thoughts.

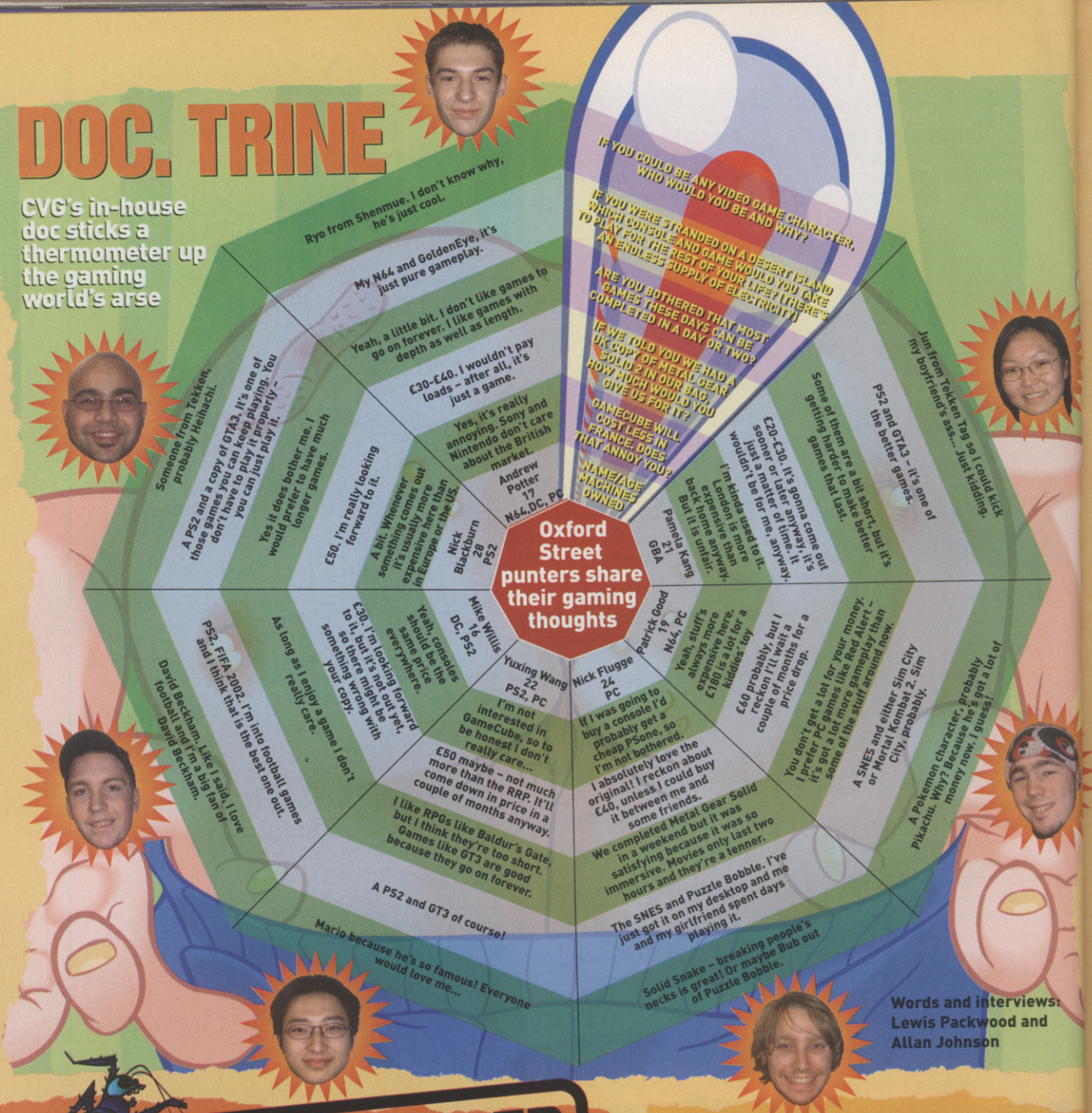
THREAD HEAD

INCOHERENT MASS-DEBATING FROM THE FORUMS OF CVG.COM

Wu Ying Ren Thu Jan 31 10:57 AM	Re: What's the best game ever, that u have played? Reply I can't decide between Shenmue Or Ocarina Of Time! One of them tho!
boohoo9 Fri Feb 01 02:26 AM	Re: What's the best game ever, that u have played? Reply **Speccy:** Dan Dare, blinding game. Never seen a platformer like it since **Sega Master System:** Alex kidd (the first) or Sonic 1 **Mega Drive:** Flashback, this game still has untold playability **Jaguar:** Wolfenstein, The best port of a true classic **Amiga:** Cannon Fodder, its like i still want to play that! :P **Snes:** Donkey Kong Country, any of the three - amazing **Arcade:** Almost all of the Balley/Midway stuff **PlayStation:** Metal Gear Solid. No doubt PC: X-Wing, nothing, not a single game has the same outstanding flight dynamics 'part from Tie Fighter.. but can I blow up the Death Star? Hell, yeah! **X-Box:** Buffy The Vampire Slayer, i know this is gonna be the downfall of my bankaccount, but who cares? Most of all i'd like the original LucasArts programming team to join forces (heh a pun) again 'n get sum decent Star Wars tie-ins going .. frankly all of the recent stuff is lame.. ultra lame .. starfighter? well have to see
Fantonald Sat Feb 02 10:29 PM	Re: What's the best game ever, that u have played? Reply The best game ever is Suikoden!
MrPartyHat Sat Feb 02 10:51 PM	Re: What's the best game ever, that u have played? Reply I hear you. 108ish characters. Luvly. Treachery is eating like a maggot at the heart of the Scarlet Moon Empire. But is the Empire corrupt or the people just disloyal? Only you can find out. Blah Blah Blah. 2 Memory card blocks to save. Tch. And we get Spanish or French or something on the back of the case too. Just like with Saturn games but not so many languages.
boobytube Sun Feb 03 11:33 AM	Re: What's the best game ever, that u have played? Reply Premier manager 3 / Final Fantasy 7 Age of Empires 2: the conquerors expansion and 100% computer game sextacy : Zelda 64 ocarina of time
yu_suzuki Wed Feb 06 06:25 PM	Re: What's the best game ever, that u have played? Reply It has to be Shenmue since it took me over 7 years to make has been in producion for 2 sega consoles, I'V changed its name 3 times and well its the best game of all time. Sorry about shenmue 2 it could have been better but becuse of repetive gameplay it ruined it but on wurd,an upwurd p.s. XBOX RULZ
mattybrown1 Wed Feb 06 07:12 PM	Re: What's the best game ever, that u have played? Reply Sensible World Of Soccer - Loads of broken joysticks on that! / Cannon Fodder / Metal Gear Solid - I cried at the end!
mattybrown1 Wed Feb 06 07:13 PM	Re: What's the best game ever, that u have played? Reply Forgot Jet Set Willy
maccaboy Wed Feb 06 10:56 PM	Re: What's the best game ever, that u have played? Reply sabrewulf on the spectrum ff7 on psx and zelda some of the finest moments ever

DOC. TRINE

CVG's in-house doc sticks a thermometer up the gaming world's arse



Words and interviews: Lewis Packwood and Allan Johnson

BUG STOMPER

TELL US ABOUT THOSE GAMING GLITCHES

Face it, we've all seen them. Sometimes they're just amusing little glitches. Other times they're horrific balls-ups that ruin whole games. Bugs – no matter how hard developers try, they can never quite get rid of them. So to make sure fellow players know where to expect a code cockroach, let us know when you find one. We'll print the worst offenders and crush them with a great big CVG hobnailed boot. Send any crime candidates you come across to mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk and allow us to do the honours.

CIVILISATION 3

Format: PC

When the other civilisations have submarines they tend to just move them around the ocean. But most of the other ships are unable to see submarines. Unfortunately, if you are at peace with a rival civilisation and you accidentally drive one of your ships near a rival's sub, you attack it immediately, causing a war when you might not want one. *From Greg Scott*

Civilisation 3: careful not to start a war...

MELTING POT

SEND US YOUR GAME IDEAS

Shenlue

Once Mario Sunshine is released, Luigi's shining hour will be over. Poor Luigi will once again have to look for work. Shenlue is the game that sees Luigi doing odd jobs around town as he saves up money to open a pizza parlour. You control Luigi 24/7 as he is called out for work, including plumbing. Be careful to avoid the evil Wario, who is also competing for the same jobs. Oh yeah, there's also arm-wrestling and shops where you can buy old Nintendo consoles and play retro games!

© Alex Huhtala, London

YOU REVIEW

JAMES BOND 007 IN... AGENT UNDER FIRE

It tries too hard to be GoldenEye, perhaps even tries to beat it. But it's too linear, unoriginal and the lack of bots in multiplayer drags this game down.

Also, they need to come up with their own ideas, instead of stealing ones that have gone before it (like the tank). 7/10
Mr PartyHat

This game stinks of mass production. It doesn't really have the 'feel' that a classic game needs. It's okay, but don't rely on it. If you really need to get it, rent it for a week. 3/10
Joeoco

After playing Agent Under Fire in my local HMV I found out it isn't really that great. The controls were fiddly and the graphics were nothing special. Stick to GoldenEye. 6/10
rjmax13cvg

"Nothing special" eh? Cop that!

So I suck do I? Die, Partyhat!

WIPEOUT FUSION

Wipeout Fusion doesn't play like Wipeout and doesn't feel like Wipeout – a big disappointment. For an adrenaline fix, you're better off sticking the original Wipeout in your PS2. 5/10
Colsey 2001

PS2 WipEout is great! I've only had Wipeout 2097 but this version is slick, fast and damn fine to play. A disappointment? What did you want? Monkeys driving them? Hey, what a good idea... 8/10
Omegarugal

Being a big fan of the series I was really looking forward to Fusion but I was in for a shock. It's a big change from the originals, but after playing it I feel that's a good thing. PS2 games are heavily criticised for the constant updates and I think the makers should be congratulated on making it a new experience. Wipeout can never have the impact it once had but they've given it a really good try. 8/10.
Deltatri3

Wipeout is pants.
Uk_gary

The jury's still out on Wipeout Fusion

ACTION REPLAY

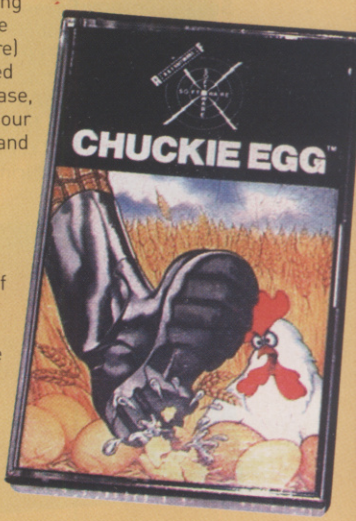
GROOVY GAMING GEAR OF YESTERYEAR
#9: ZX SPECTRUM

Year released: 1982
Manufacturer: Sinclair Research

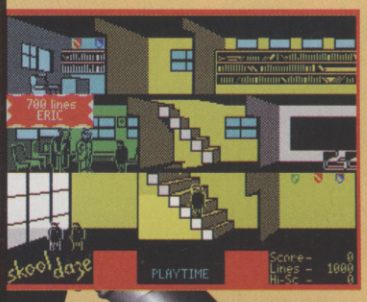
DID YOU KNOW?
The original Spectrum keyboard earned the name 'Dead Flesh' because of the way the rubber keys felt to the touch. There are an estimated 10,000 games available for the machine.

WHAT IS IT?
The brainchild of 'Uncle' Clive Sinclair, a low-cost colour 3.5MHz computer with 48k of memory, eight colours and sound capabilities on a par with your average mobile phone. Dominated the home computing scene in the UK and spawned the infamous 'bedroom programmers'.

WHY DO I WANT ONE?
Another slice of gaming history. There were hundreds of genuinely original Spectrum games, the likes of which will never be seen again. Emulators are fine but the real fun is watching the stripy lines cascading down the TV as the games load up. Ultimate (now known as Rare) games are the most sought-after and pushed the machine to its limits with each new release, especially Knightlore and Gunfright, though our all-time favourites are the classic Atic Atac and Lunar Jetman. Other gems include Deathchase, Wheelie, Manic Miner, Jet Set Willy and Chuckie Egg.



LOOK OUT FOR...
The interface 2 adaptor slots into the back of the Speccy and lets you plug in games on very small, cute ROM cartridges. But few were made because they cost more to make than cheapo tapes. The Sinclair Microdrive, which requires the interface 1, held 85K on a single 'Microfloppy' (essentially a tiny continuous loop of tape), whilst the printer literally burnt characters onto a roll of aluminium paper by means of a small electric charge.



WHERE CAN I GET ONE?
Sorry, Ebay again! Prices vary from a tenner to over £50 for a complete boxed set-up. The less powerful but earlier 16k version can fetch up to £100. Peripherals are usually harder to find.

ALTERNATIVELY
Check out www.retrospec.org for Spectrum classics remade with better graphics and sound. Meanwhile, www.void.jump.org is a massive archive of playable games with incredibly detailed insights into each game, reproduction cassette inlays and handy utilities. Planet Sinclair (www.nvg.ntnu.no/sinclair) has loads of info and the legendary 'Crash' magazine. Or head to the Game On exhibition from May 16 to September 15 at the Barbican, London.

THE DOGHOUSE

BEWARE: THESE CHEATS CAN BITE!

Our fluffy mutt has a nose for cheats. In fact, other than peeing on trees, there's nothing beats a good whiff of foul play. So if you sniff out any decent cheats, send them in. Just make sure they're good ones, cos Hunter goes for the nuts.

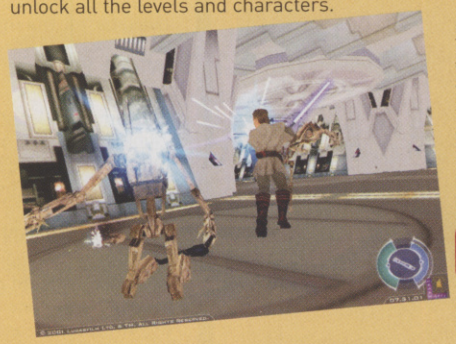
GRAND THEFT AUTO III

Yes, there are even more codes for the magnificent GTA III. You'll get a confirmation message after each.

BETTER DRIVING SKILLS: Press R1, L1, R2, L1, Left, R1, R1, Triangle during gameplay.
FOG: Press L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, X during gameplay.
OVERCAST SKIES: Press L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, Square during gameplay.
RAIN: Press L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, Circle during gameplay.
NORMAL WEATHER: Press L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, Triangle during gameplay.
SPEED UP TIME: Press Circle, Circle, Circle, Square, Square, Square, Square, L1, Triangle, Circle, Triangle during gameplay.
PEDESTRIANS RIOT: Press Down, Up, Left, Up, X, R1, R2, L2, L1 during gameplay.
PEDESTRIANS ATTACK: Press Down, Up, Left, Up, X, R1, R2, L1, L2 during gameplay.
PEDESTRIANS CRAZY: Press R2, R1, Triangle, X, L2, L1, Up, Down during gameplay.

STAR WARS OBI WAN

Start a new game and use GREYTHERAT as a saved game name. This will unlock all the levels and characters.



WWF SMACKDOWN JUST BRING IT!

Here's how to get an extra character, left over from last month.

MOLLY HOLLY: Select a female. Talk trash on the microphone to the first wrestler that appears in the ring. Go to the Parking Lot and speak to Vince McMahon, who will assign you a singles match. Win the next match. Backstage you'll run into the Women's Champion, who will challenge you to a six-man tag team match. Go to the VIP room and tell Vince McMahon that you don't want to compete in a tag and you want it to be a singles match. He'll grant your request and give you a title shot against the Women's Champ. Win the match then defend your title from Molly Holly to unlock her.

NEW YORK RACE

Input the following as player names for a variety of effects.

NAME	EFFECT
SHALEA	Unlimited energy
YXINYEDO	Unlock tracks/difficulty
NIKITA	Bonus cars
BIGWOLF	All cars in beginner mode
OELITA	All cars in Pro mode
POOLWOLF	All cars in Expert mode

CIVILISATION III

In Civilisation III, when you are using a government type that uses money to rush through the building of units and improvements, you can halve the initial asking price. To do so select the unit/improvement you wish to rush-buy and wait one full turn so that there is at least one shield in the construction bar. After you've done that, select the rush-buy option and it will be half the price.

STAR WARS: GALACTIC BATTLEGROUNDS

Press Enter while you're playing the game in order to display the chat window. Now enter one of the following codes to activate a cheat. Be warned, however, that by using cheats you may be led to the dark side of the force.

Input *forcefood* to equip yourself with 1000 food, *forceore* for 1000 ore or *forcecarbon* for 1000 carbon.

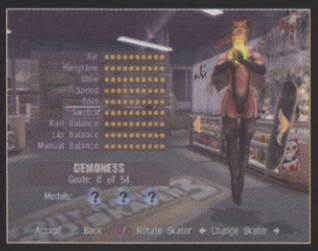
Type *forcenova* for 1000 nova, *forcesight* to remove fog, *forceexplore* for a full map, and *skywalker* to win the mission.

Type *forcebuild* for construction and research, *tarkin* to kill all enemies, and *simonsays* for a killer ewok.

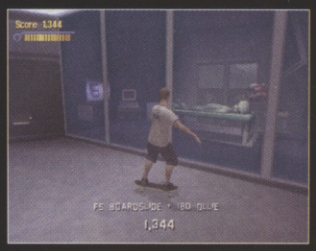
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Last month we told you the hard way to unlock some of the secrets in this game. Well, this month we reveal the easy way to do it. Yep, cheat codes. Also, here's a few more things you can unlock through your own hard work. Complete Career Mode the following number of times to unlock new cheat modes. They are Snowboard Mode (11), Always Special (12), Perfect Rail Balance (13), Super Stats (14), Giant Mode (15), Slowmo Mode (16), Perfect Manual Balance (17), Tiny Mode (18), Moon Physics (19), Expert Mode (20) and First Person Mode (21).

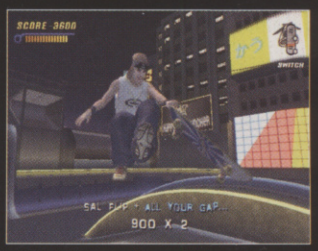
MASTER CODE: Enter options, select cheats and input 'backdoor' (case-sensitive). A money sound confirms correct code entry.



CHARACTERS: Enter options followed by cheats and input 'YOHOMIES' (case-sensitive). A money sound confirms correct entry.



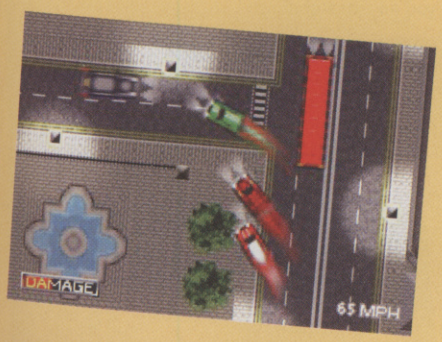
LEVELS: Enter options followed by cheats and input 'roadtrip' (case sensitive). A money sound confirms correct code entry.



FMVs: Enter options followed by cheats and input 'Peepshow' (case sensitive). A money sound confirms correct code entry.

MIDNIGHT CLUB

ALL CARS: Use AGEM as a password to unlock all the vehicles in the game.



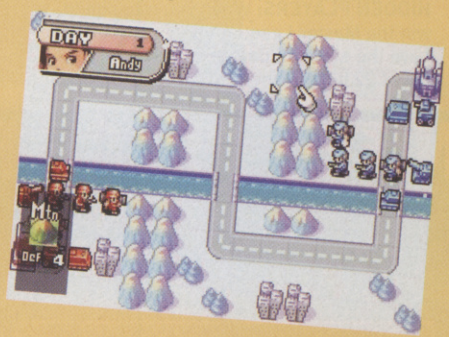
LOTUS CHALLENGE

This is what you must win to unlock the earlier cars in the game. Check back next month for the rest.

CAR	WIN
CLASSIC B:	
Elite	England Novice, Classic B Championship
Lotus Cortina	London Novice, Classic B Championship
Europa S1	Florida Novice, Classic B Championship
CLASSIC A:	
Super Seven	London Pro, Classic A Championship
Eleven S2	England Pro, Classic A Championship
Clubman's Car	Win Classic B Championship
Elan S4 Sprint	Arizona Pro, Classic A Championship
Europa Special	Win Classic B Championship
CLASSIC SUPER:	
Compitition Elan	England Champion, Classic Super Championship
Group 7 Sports Racer	Arizona Champion, Classic Super Championship
Sports Prototype	Win Classic A Championship
Esprit S1	Win Classic A Championship
B CLASS:	
Excel SE	London Novice, B Class Championship
Elan SE	England Novice, B Class Championship
Elise 111s	Florida Novice, B Class Championship
Elan S4 Sprint	Arizona Pro, Classic A Championship
Europa Special	Win Classic B Championship

ADVANCE WARS

Complete the campaign mode. Enter the Battle Maps screen and buy the Advance Campaign item for a single coin. Hold Select and choose campaign mode to begin Advanced Campaign, where you face a harder AI.



YOUR BEST TIPS

Every month the best reader tip will be printed and will score one of the latest games as a prize. Send your tips to: barny_zoeller@dennis.co.uk or

THE DOGHOUSE,
COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES,
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PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

You need to start a new Driver Profile with the name Nosliw. This name will unlock all of the cars and all of the tracks, giving you loads of options. Now you can get super cars like the TVR, Aston Martin, Porshes and Ferraris. It also unlocks all the stages so you can race them against decent competition.

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

Cheat menu: Start a new game and enter your name as ALPUN. Start the game, quit out and look in the Extras menu for a cheat option. In here you can switch cheats on or off.

LUCKY LUKE WANTED

To open all levels bang in 2571 at the password screen. Cheat submitted by Vince Mainolfi.

ROBOT WARS ARENAS OF DESTRUCTION

CHEAT MODE: Enter your name as JPEARCE when first prompted and you will get all the robots, arenas and 999999 credits.

KAO THE KANGAROO

Here are passwords for the whole game, submitted by GBA master Vince Mainolfi. To input them, go to the password screen and select the pictures in the correct order. This will be very useful if you get completely stuck on any particular level, as you will be able to skip on to the next instead of pulling out your hair and stamping on your expensive GBA.

DEADLY WATERFALLS: GLOVE, MUSHROOM, XMAS TREE, KAO, KAO
MYTHICAL CAVES: MUSHROOM, XMAS TREE, FISH, KAO, KAO
LOST VILLAGE: TREE, FISH, OWL, KAO, KAO
MEGASAURUS FEROCIOUS: FISH, OWL, BUTTERFLY, KAO, KAO
EVIL DESCENT: OWL, BUTTERFLY, CROW, KAO, KAO
LITTLE VALLEY: BUTTERFLY, CROW, KEY, KAO, KAO
FROZEN LAKE: CROW, KEY, FROG, KAO, KAO
ICE CAVES: KEY, KEY, KAO, KAO, KAO
BEAR PEAK: FROG, FROG, KAO, KAO, KAO
BIG BLIZZARD: GENIE LAMP, PALM TREE, HEART, KAO, KAO
LIGHTNING SPEED: PALM TREE, HEART, K-COIN, KAO, KAO
PERIL DESERT: HEART, K-COIN, FLAG, KAO, KAO
TRADE VILLAGE: K-COIN, FLAG, BOMB, KAO, KAO
ANCIENT RUNES: FLAG, BOMB, KAO, KAO, KAO
HOLY TEMPLE: BOMB, KAO, GLOVE, KAO, KAO
HYPNODJIN: BOMB, FLAG, K-COIN, KAO, KAO
NEVERENDING SLIDE: FLAG, K-COIN, HEART, KAO, KAO
ISLAND SHORES: K-COIN, HEART, PALM TREE, KAO, KAO
CROC ISLAND: HEART, PALM TREE, GENIE LAMP, KAO, KAO
HUNTER: PALM TREE, GENIE LAMP, FROG, KAO, KAO

SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE

SMITHERS: In the Options menu hold down L1+R1 and press Triangle, Triangle, Square, Square. You will hear a noise. Smithers won't show on the character select screen so pick a character and when you start you will be Smithers in Mr Burns's limo.
MORE CAMERA ANGLES: In the Options menu hold down L1+R1 and then press Triangle four times. You will hear a noise. Start a new game and flick through the camera options in the pause menu to see a few more angles, including a Grand Theft Auto-type angle.
FLAT CHARACTERS: In the Options menu hold down L1+R1 then tap Circle four times. You will hear a noise. Start a new game and you will notice that all the characters except your own will be flat.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

HIDDEN TEAMS: Win the following cups with certain teams to unlock extra squads:

CUP	SQUAD
International Cup	Euro All Stars
International League	World All Stars
European Cup	Euro Classics
European Cup with Netherlands Team	Netherland Classics
European Cup with Germany	German Classics
European Cup with Brazil	Brazil Classics
European Cup with Argentina	Argentina Classics

HIDDEN PLAYERS: When you manage to win the Master League A Season, you will have the ability to unlock an extra 11 players out of 22 hidden ones.

REALLY STUCK ?

Absolutely stumped on a game? Ridiculed by your mates? There is hope: The Computer And Video Games Tips Helpline.

0906 466 4659

It's open seven days a week, 8am-11pm. On the very rare occasion that they can't help, your query will be passed on to a support team, who guarantees to find you an answer within 24 hours.

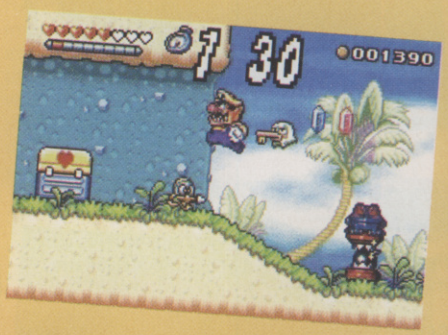
Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does before calling. In case of problems, please call Customer Services on 0870 800 6155.

SILENT HILL 2: RESTLESS DREAMS

THE BLUE GEM: Beat the game once and also finish Maria's sub-game. Start a new game and you will find a Blue Gem in the toilets at the start.
XBOX EXTRA ENDING: Use the Blue Gem in the alternative hospital garden, the boat docks before using the boat and in room 312 in the hotel before the video tape part. This will give you an extra ending.

WARIOLAND 4

Complete the game under the Hard difficulty setting, then start a new game and the Super Hard setting can be selected.



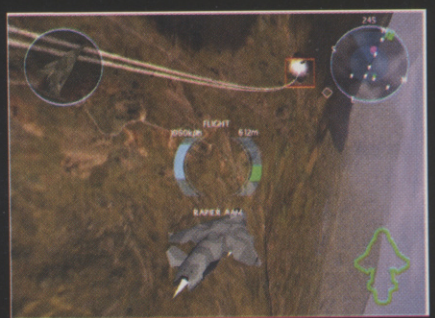
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

ALL WRESTLERS: At the main menu press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Triangle, Triangle, Square. This unlocks all the wrestlers from the character select screen.

DROPSHIP: UNITED PEACE FORCE

This game is harder than Rusell Crowe in Gladiator. No doubt about it, you will need cheats for it. To unlock the following go to the main menu and select Classified Files then go into the unlock screen where you will be presented with a keypad. Type in the cheats here. Even using these codes, the game will test you to your limits as you struggle to control your craft. At least you don't need to worry about taking damage or running out of bullets. If a level is still too tough, then just select the next one.

GOD MODE: In this mode, enter **TEAMBUDDIES** in the Unlock screen



ALL MISSIONS: For this cheat, enter **KINGSLEY** in the Unlock screen

Infinite Ammunition: This requires you to enter **BLASTRADIUS** in the Unlock screen

MAX PAYNE

Max Payne is one of the grittiest PS2 shooters. To make it a whole lot easier, use these cheats. In order to input them all, you first need to pause the game then press the buttons indicated below, quickly. Some of the cheats may need to be re-enabled after cutscenes.

Ammo: Pause and press L1, L2, R1, R2, Triangle, Circle, X, Square

All weapons: Pause and press L1, L2, R1, R2, Triangle, Square, X, Circle

Pain Killers: Pause and press L1, L2, R2, R1, Triangle, Circle, X, Square

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A = 01
A Bug's Life
Abe's Exoddus
Abe's Odysee
Ace Combat 4
Action Man Dest. X
Advance Wars
Age of Empires
Age of Empires 2
Airblade
Alex F's Play Man 2001
Alex F's Player Manager
Alien Resurrection
Alien Trilogy
Alone in the Dark 4
Alundra 1 & 2
Amerzone
Army Men Air Attack
Army Men Sgt's Heroes 2
Army Men: Land Sea Air
Army Men: Lock & Load
Army Men: Omega Sold.
Atlantis

B = 02
Baldur's Gate
Batman Vengeance
Black & White
Blade
Bloody Roar 3
Bouncer
Breath of Fire
Breath of Fire 4
Broken Sword 1 & 2
Bugs & Taz: Time Busters
Burnout

C = 03
C & C: Red Alert
C & C: Tiberian Sun
C-12 Final Resistance
CAPCOM vs SNK 2
Champ. Manager 2000
Champ. Manager 2001
Chase the Express
Code Veronica X
Colin McRae Rally
Colin McRae Rally 2
Command & Conquer
Conkers Bad For Day
Constructor
Cossaks: European Wars
Crash Bandicoot 1, 2 & 3
Crash Bash
Crash Team Racing
Crazy Taxi
Cricket 2002

D = 04
D Mirra BMX: Max Remix
D. Nukem: L. of Babes
D. Nukem: Time to Kill
Dark Cloud
Dave Mirra BMX 2
David Beckham Soccer
Dead or Alive 2
Devil May Cry
Die Hard Trilogy
Digimon World
Digimon World 2
Dino Crisis
Dino Crisis 2
Disc World 2
Discworld Noir
Disney's Dinosaur
Doom
Dracula Resurrection
Dracula Last Sanctuary
Dragonball Z: Final Bout
Driver
Driver 2
Dropship
Dune
Dynasty Warriors 2

E = 05
Eighteen Wheeler
Empire Earth
Escape Monkey Island
Evergrace
Evil Dead
Evil Twin
Extermination
Extreme G 3

F = 06
FA P. Lgue F'ball Man. 00
FA P. Lgue F'ball Man. 01
Fear Effect
Fear Effect: Retro Helix
FIFA 2000, 2001 & 2002
Final Fantasy 7, 8,9& 10
Formula 1 2001
Fur Fighters

G = 07
Gangsters 2
Gauntlet Legends
Goldeneye
Gran Turismo
Gran Turismo 2
Gran Turismo 3
Grand Theft Auto
Grand Theft Auto 2
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grinch
Gun Griffon Blaze
Gundam Battle Assault

H = 08
Half Life
Half Life: Blue Shift
Half Life: Opposing Force
Harry Potter
Harvest Moon
Headhunter
Hidden & Dangerous
Hogs of War

I = 09
In Cold Blood
ISS Pro Evolution
ISS Pro Evolution 2
Italian Job

J = 10
Jak & Daxter
James Bond: Goldeneye
James Bond: TWINE
Jedi Power Battles

K = 11
Knockout Kings 2001

L = 12
Legacy of Kain
Legend of Dragoon
Legends of Wrestling
LMA Manager 2001
LMA Manager 2002

M = 13
Mario 64
Mario Kart Super Circuit
Martian Gothic
Mat Hoffman's BMX
Max Payne
Medal of Honor
Medal of Honor Underg.
MediEvil
MediEvil 2
Men in Black
Metal Gear Solid
Metal Gear Solid 2
Metropolis Street Racer
Midnight Club
Mission Impossible
Monkey Island (Escape)
Monkey Island Series
Monster Rancher
Mortal Kombat Trilogy
Mummy Returns
MX 2002

O = 15
Oni
Onimusha: Warlords
Operation Winback

P = 16
Parasite Eve 2
Perfect Dark
Pokemon Crystal
Pokemon Gold
Pokemon Silver
Pokemon Blue
Pokemon Red
Pokemon Snap
Pokemon Yellow
Premier Manager 2000
Premier Manager 99
Pro Evolution Soccer
Project Eden

Q = 17
Quake 2

R = 18
Rainbow Six
Rayman 1 & 2
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing
Ready 2 Rumble Round 2
Red Faction
Resident Evil 1, 2 & 3
Resident Evil: C. Veronica
Resident Evil: Code V. X
Return to C. Wolfenstein
Robot Wars
Rogue Spear
Roller Coaster Tycoon
Rumble Racing
Rune: Viking Warlord

S = 19
S Palmer's Snowboarder
Shadow of Memories
Shadowman
Shenmue
Shenmue 2
Silent Bomber
Silent Hill 1 & 2
Silent Scope
Silver
Sim City 3000
SimCity 2000
Simpson's Road Rage
Simpsons Wrestling
Sims
Sims Hot Date
Sims House Party
Sims: Livin' It Up
Sky Odyssey
Smackdown
Smackdown 2
Smackdown! Just Bring It
Smugglers Run
Smugglers Run 2
Soldier of Fortune
Sonic Adventure
Sonic Adventure 2
Soul Reaver 1 & 2
South Park
South Park Rally
Spec Ops: Covert Assault
Spec Ops: Rangers Elite
Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol
Spiderman
Spiderman 2
Spy Hunter
Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage
Spyro 3: Year of Dragon
Spyro the Dragon
Spyro: Season of Ice
SSX - Snowboarding
SSX Tricky
Star Trek: Invasion
Star Wars Jedi P. Battle
Star Wars: Phantom M.
Star Wars: Rogue Sqd.
Star Wars: St. Fighter
State of Emergency
Stronghold
Summoner
Super Runabout
Super Smash Brothers
Syphon Filter 1, 2 & 3

T = 20
Tarzan
Tekken 3
Tekken Tag Tournament
Tenchu 2
The Italian Job
The Mummy Returns
The World is Not Enough
Theme Hospital
Theme Park World
This is Football 2002
Thunderhawk: Op.
Time Crisis 2
Time Splitters
TOCA World Touring Cars
Tokyo Extreme Racer
Tomb Raider
Tomb Raider 2
Tomb Raider 3
Tomb Raider 4
Tomb Raider 5
Tony Hawk's
Tony Hawk's 2
Tony Hawk's 3
Top Gun: Combat Zones
Toy Story 2
Turok 2
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter
Twisted Metal Black

U = 21
Urban Chaos

V = 22
Vagrant Story
Vanishing Point
Victorious Boxers
V-Rally 2

W = 23
Warzone 2100
World C Snooker 2002
World Is Not Enough
World's S. Police Chases
Worms Armageddon
WRC: World Rally Champ
WWF Attitude
WWF No Mercy
WWF Rd to Wrestlemania
WWF Smackdown 2
WWF Smackdown 3
WWF Wrestlemania 2000

X = 24
X-Files
X-Men Mut. Academy 2
X-Squad

Z = 26
Zelda
Zelda: Majora's Mask
Zelda: Oracle of Ages
Zelda: Oracle of Seasons

0-9 = 27
007 Agent Under Fire
007 Racing

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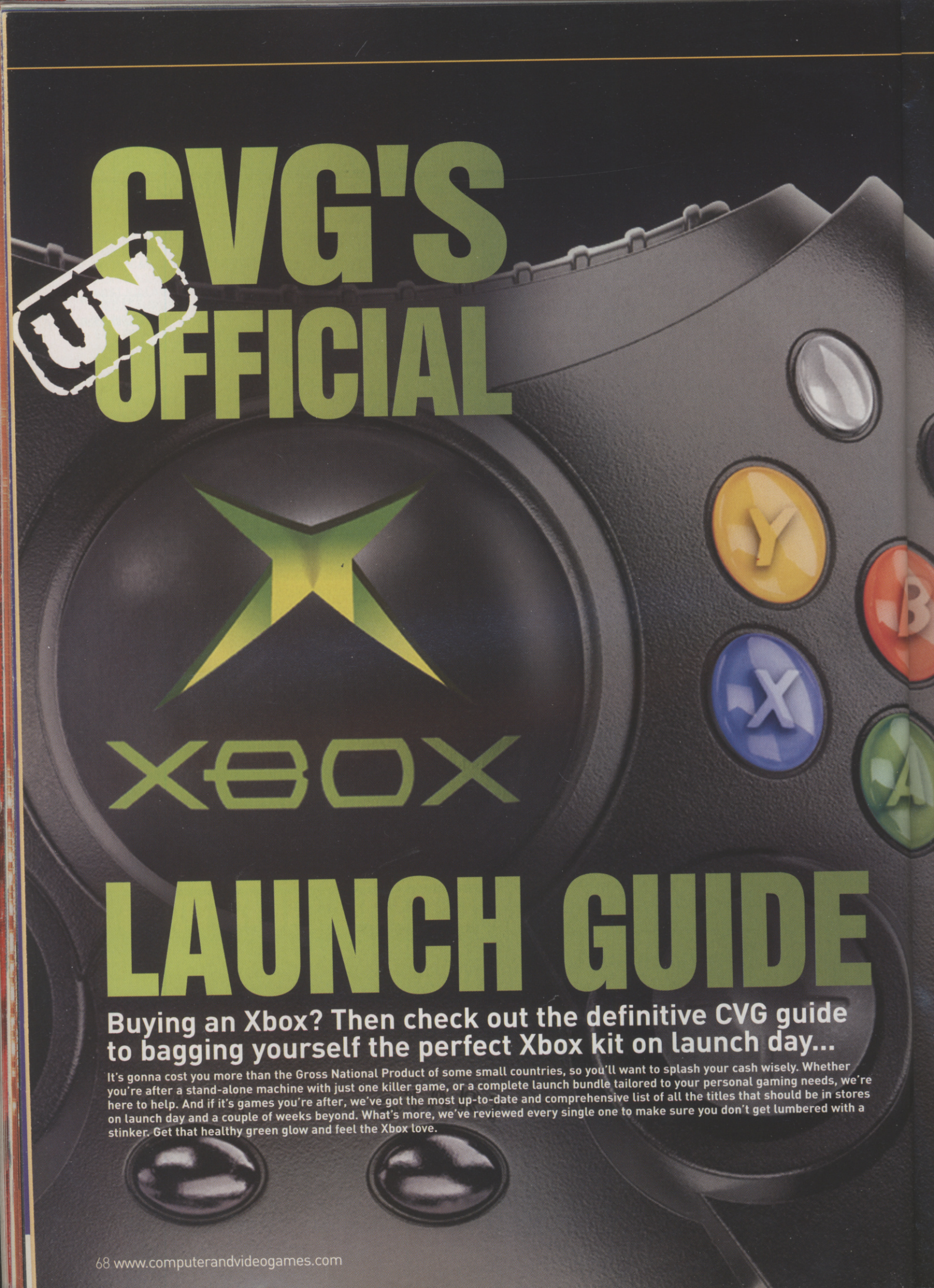


LAUNCH GUIDE

Buying an Xbox? Then check out the definitive CVG guide to bagging yourself the perfect Xbox kit on launch day...

It's gonna cost you more than the Gross National Product of some small countries, so you'll want to splash your cash wisely. Whether you're after a stand-alone machine with just one killer game, or a complete launch bundle tailored to your personal gaming needs, we're here to help. And if it's games you're after, we've got the most up-to-date and comprehensive list of all the titles that should be in stores on launch day and a couple of weeks beyond. What's more, we've reviewed every single one to make sure you don't get lumbered with a stinker. Get that healthy green glow and feel the Xbox love.

BUNDLE OF JOY

Most high street stores are just selling the machine by itself, but if you want special bundles and a small discount, check out the Internet retail sites. You might have to wait for delivery, but you'll get the perfect games package for you. Here are the best online deals we found.

MAYHEM BUNDLE

From: amazon.co.uk
Cost: £396.96
What you get: Save loads of money and get two of the best launch games available, Halo and Dead Or Alive 3, with this awesome bundle. You even get an extra official pad to thrash your mates in the arena in DOA3 or play the unbelievable co-op mode in Halo. A tasty package indeed.

CVG 'BEST BUY' AWARD

XBOX RACING PACK

From: eb.uk.com
Cost: £429.99
What you get: Console, controller, the all-encompassing rally experience that is RalliSport Challenge, and the delicious Project Gotham Racing. Get the best from these driving delights with the bundled Ferrari 360 Modena Steering Wheel.

ADRENALIN BUNDLE

From: amazon.co.uk
Cost: £396.96
What you get: Console, two official controllers, Project Gotham Racing and Amped. The perfect pack for extreme competitive gaming.

XBOX ACTION PACK

From: eb.uk.com
Cost: £409.99
What you get: Console, controller, Radica Arcade Stick, Halo and DOA3.

PERIPHERAL VISIONS

FERRARI 360 MODENA RACING WHEEL

From: Thrustmaster
Cost: £44.99
A game wheel that's worthy of the Ferrari brand. Great vibrations, excellent button layout and an innovative Knee Top Adapter for easy laptop use make this a racing winner.

ADVANCED AV PACK

From: Microsoft
Cost: TBC
This little box of tricks is still to be confirmed, but essential. With ports for composite and S-Video leads, as well as an optical output for a surround sound kit, this is truly hardcore.

FREESTYLER BOARD

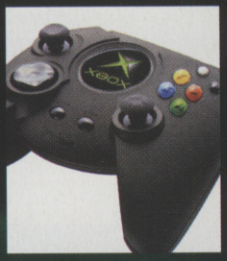
From: Thrustmaster
Cost: £69.99
Lean and pivot on the board to control your on-screen hero, and use the special joypad to execute trick moves.

PROGRAMMABLE GAMEPAD

From: Thrustmaster
Cost: £19.99
Fully programmable pad ideal for the tricky button combos required in Dead Or Alive 3.

XBOX CONTROLLER

From: Microsoft
Cost: £24.99
The official pad is the priciest, but quality is 100 per cent guaranteed.

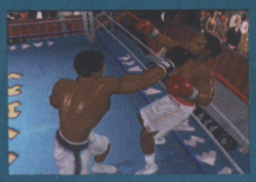


POWER PAD

From: InterAct
Cost: £19.99
Two versions of the InterAct pad are available. This is the basic model.

INCOMING! INCOMING INCOMING! INCOMING INCOMING! INCOMI

Battle Engine Aquila
Due: TBC



Knockout Kings 2002
Due: April

Star Wars Obi-Wan
Due: April

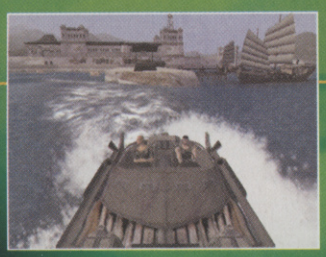
Taz Wanted
Due: June

Blood Omen 2
Due: Spring

Crash Bandicoo
Due: Spring

THE X GAMES

Azurik: Rise of Perathia
Players: 1
Azurik's blue, probably because his game is the very definition of average. Plain visuals, pointlessly huge environments and tired cheesy puzzles make this pong.
Score: 5/10

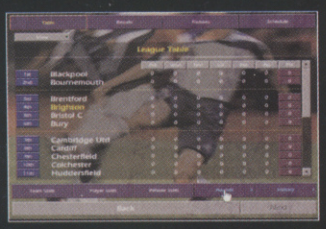


Blood Wake
Players: 1-4
Beautiful water effects but distinctly average mission-based play in this speed-boat shambles. A complete lack of tension leaves this dead in the water.
Score: 5/10

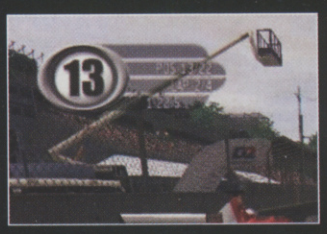
Dark Summit
Players: 1-2
Mission-based snowboarding adventure where the missions are as dull as the sludgy snow. Utterly devoid of any charm, a bad idea poorly executed.
Score: 4/10

Genma Onimusha
Players: 1
Overly difficult and old-fashioned, but still pretty good fun. Won't show off the power of Xbox, but will give you a satisfying gaming experience.
Score: 7/10

Batman Vengeance
Players: 1
A brilliantly stylised, gadget-fuelled adventure that will leave you wanting to swoosh around town in a big black cape. Not hugely original, but what it does, it does with great flair.
Score: 7/10



Championship Manager: 01/02
Players: 1
The football management behemoth and uber-selling games franchise does the business on Xbox. Unquestionably awesome, but absolutely for the footie-management minded only.
Score: 8/10

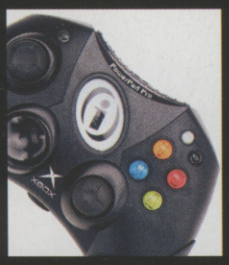


F1 2002
Players: 1-4
Competent Formula 1 sim with loads of play modes but it doesn't look any better than the PlayStation 2 version. Yet another lazy conversion from the guys at EA.
Score: 7/10

Jet Set Radio Future
Players: 1-4
A bigger, brighter but dumbed-down version of the cult Dreamcast classic. Looks wonderful and plays well, but why on earth did they meddle with the formula?
Score: 7/10

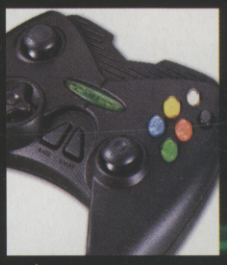
POWER PAD PRO

From: InterAct
Cost: £19.99
Its rubber grips make it slightly more deluxe than the standard Power Pad, and it's also a bit smaller in the palm.



ADVANCED CONTROLLER

From: Joytech
Cost: £19.99
Solid, tasty controller with a glowing green logo. Cool.



XBOX CONTROLLER

From: Radica
Cost: £19.99
About as different looking from the official pad as you can get. We like.

TOP GUN FOX 2 PRO

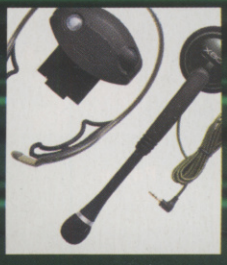
From: Thrustmaster
Cost: £29.99
Out shortly after launch, this ultimate flight stick should be great... once they release some flight games!

8MB MEMORY CARD

From: Microsoft
Cost: £29.99
Perfect for swapping data with mates and portable playing.

XBOX VOICE COM

From: Microsoft
Cost: TBC
Release is still 'to be confirmed' but we like the idea of chatting to buddies online and all that voice-recognition stuff.



INCOMING!

The Lord Of The Rings
Due: TBC

WWF Raw Is War
Due: TBC

Mike Tyson Boxing
Due: April

Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter Due: Autumn

SSX Tricky
Due: April

HALO

Developer: Bungie
Publisher: Microsoft
The visuals shine like a gangsta rapper's gold teeth and the gameplay packs a punch harder than Tyson on steroids. If you only buy one game for your Xbox, make sure it's Halo.

The solo game is awesome, but team up with a mate for unbelievable co-operative camaraderie-tastic play. Halo is an enormous leap over what rival console shooters have offered so far, and is one of the finest launch games in recent memory. If there is a game to justify the hefty Xbox price tag, Halo is it.

9

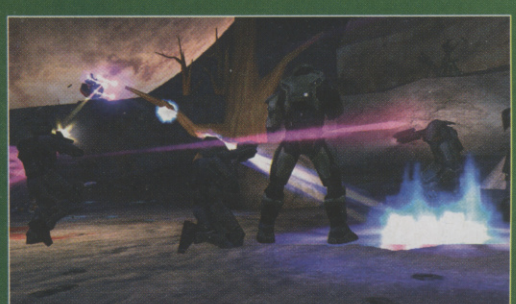
CVG 'ESSENTIAL' AWARD

Gorgeous dropships decend from above

Not one but two races of alien to shred

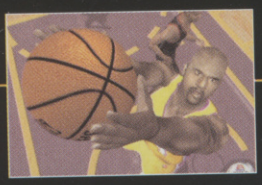
Halo is one of the most atmospheric games you'll ever play

Ride jeeps, fly planes, shoot everything. Unbelievable



Crossfire looks stunning but stings like a wasp on your butt

Mad Dash Racing
Players: 1-4
Better in multiplayer than solo-play, there's a fair amount of bestial fun to be had in this kart-style racer without the karts.
Derivative, but enjoyable none the less.
Score: 6/10



NBA Live 2002
Players: 1-4
A rubbish port of an average PS2 game, this slam-dunks its way into mediocrity with crap controls, plain visuals and imbalanced gameplay difficulty.
Score: 5/10

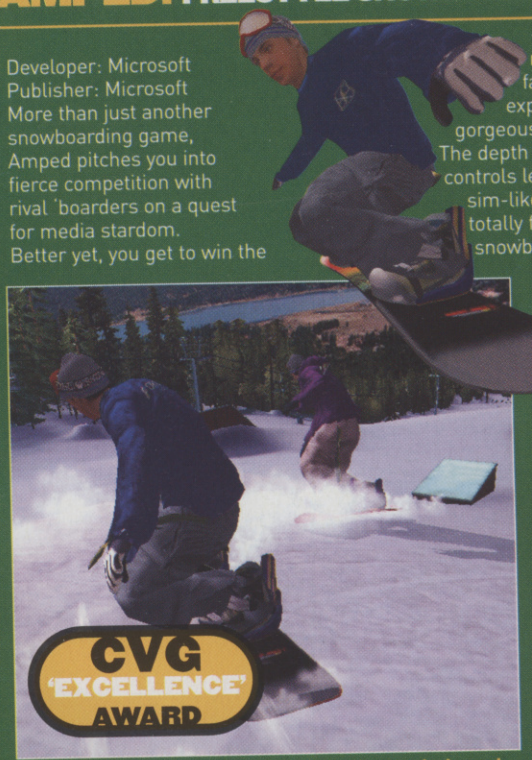
Max Payne
Players: 1
A fantastic conversion of the PC belter. Slow down time to dodge bullets, Matrix-style. Short and sweet – a few new features would've been nice.
Score: 8/10

NHL 2002
Players: 1-4
Sim-heavy, by-the-numbers hockey game that's playable but po-faced. Lacking in sparkle, it's strictly one for fans of the sport only.
Score: 6/10

AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING

Developer: Microsoft
Publisher: Microsoft
More than just another snowboarding game, Amped pitches you into fierce competition with rival 'boarders on a quest for media stardom.
Better yet, you get to win the respect of sponsors and fans across the most expansive collection of gorgeous slopey environments. The depth and intricacy of the controls lend the game a hardcore, sim-like feel while remaining totally fun to play. Total snowboarding nirvana.

8



Extreme sports never seemed so serious as in Amped

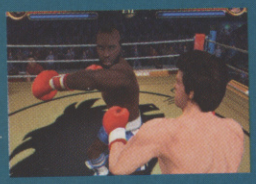
Huge mountains to explore in all weather

Win the respect of peers by not bailing

INCOMING! INCOMING! INCOMING! INCOMING! INCOMING! INCOMI

Crash
Due: April

Malice: Kat's Tale
Due: Autumn



Rocky
Due: Winter

Unreal Championship
Due: June

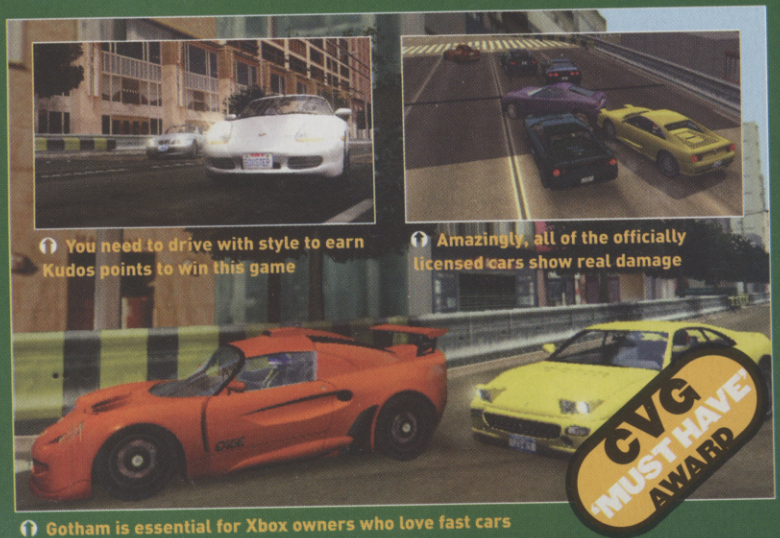
Buffy The Vampire Slayer
Due: May

Gun Metal
Due: Spring

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

Developer: Bizarre Creations
Publisher: Microsoft
Race with style and speed across photo-realistic, accurately modelled capital cities. As well as earning points for your slick driving skillz, you can choose from a dazzling selection of licensed cars that take damage as you drive. Multiplayer races for up to four players are packed in too, and it all blasts pure quality from its tailpipe. More fun than GTA3.

9

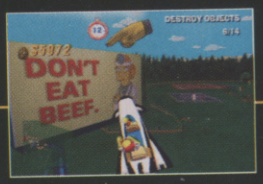


You need to drive with style to earn Kudos points to win this game

Amazingly, all of the officially licensed cars show real damage

Gotham is essential for Xbox owners who love fast cars

Shrek
Players: 1
Looks just like the movie, plays like a big green bogey. Simple, repetitive gameplay firmly relegates Shrek to the kiddie end of Xbox players.
Score: 5/10



The Simpsons Road Rage
Players: 1-2
Easy port? Must be EA again. This is an ugly, shallow experience that's just about bearable, thanks to a few Simpsons touches. Feeble fun.
Score: 5/10

Test Drive Off-Road Wide Open Players: 1-4
You get a couple of extra features over the PS2 version, but sadly you also get all of that version's flaws like crap draw distance and plain visuals.
Score: 4/10

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Players: 1-2
The Hawk flies onto Xbox with a new arena to grind around. Plays like the PS2 game, but there are few visual refinements and the pad layout makes it tricky.
Score: 9/10

NHL Hitz
Players: 1-4
Arcade laughs and neat gameplay touches make this the hockey game of choice for Xboxers. The cool mission mode and awesome soundtrack ice the puck-shaped cake.
Score: 7/10

RalliSport Challenge
Players: 1-4
Big on realism, this is a tough but great all-round rally experience. Packed with every feature and mode you could ask for, and looks the jive too.
Score: 8/10

DEAD OR ALIVE 3

Developer: Team Ninja
Publisher: Microsoft
The most beautiful of all the launch games, DOA3 really hammers home the fact that Xbox packs some real power. Use the multi-level fight arenas to your advantage and slam your rivals into breakable objects for extra pain. Blat!

The fighting is more balanced between offensive and defensive than most other beat 'em ups, which makes you play in a different way. It might not suit everyone but the unbelievable visuals at least help to make it a bit sweeter on your tongue.

8

CVG 'EXCELLENCE' AWARD

Don't mess with this lovely or you'll feel pain

Shame she ain't real, eh?

Leaves fall from trees as you smack her into them

Clothing creases and rumples as you scrap – stunning

A boot to the belly makes hats fly and energy bars shrink

INCOMING!

The Elder scrolls III: Morrowind Due: June

Whacked! Due: Autumn

Cel Damage Due: April

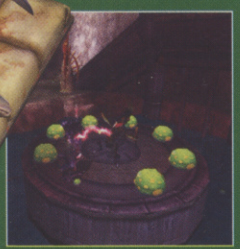
New Legends Due: Spring

ISS2 Due: TBC

ODDWORLD: Mmunch's Oddysee

CVG 'EXCELLENCE' AWARD

Chase me! make your Mudokon buddies work, attack or fall to their deaths. Yes!



The darker graphical style is unusual and cool

Zap your way to freedom and glory. Tzzt!

Developer: Oddworld Inhabitants
Publisher: Microsoft
Not in the same league as Halo or Gotham, but still a fine game for anyone looking for a worthy Xbox third-person hero. Puzzles involve lots of character switching and using teams of ugly buddies to do your bidding. Occasionally frustrating, but always engaging, Munch's is well worth checking out.

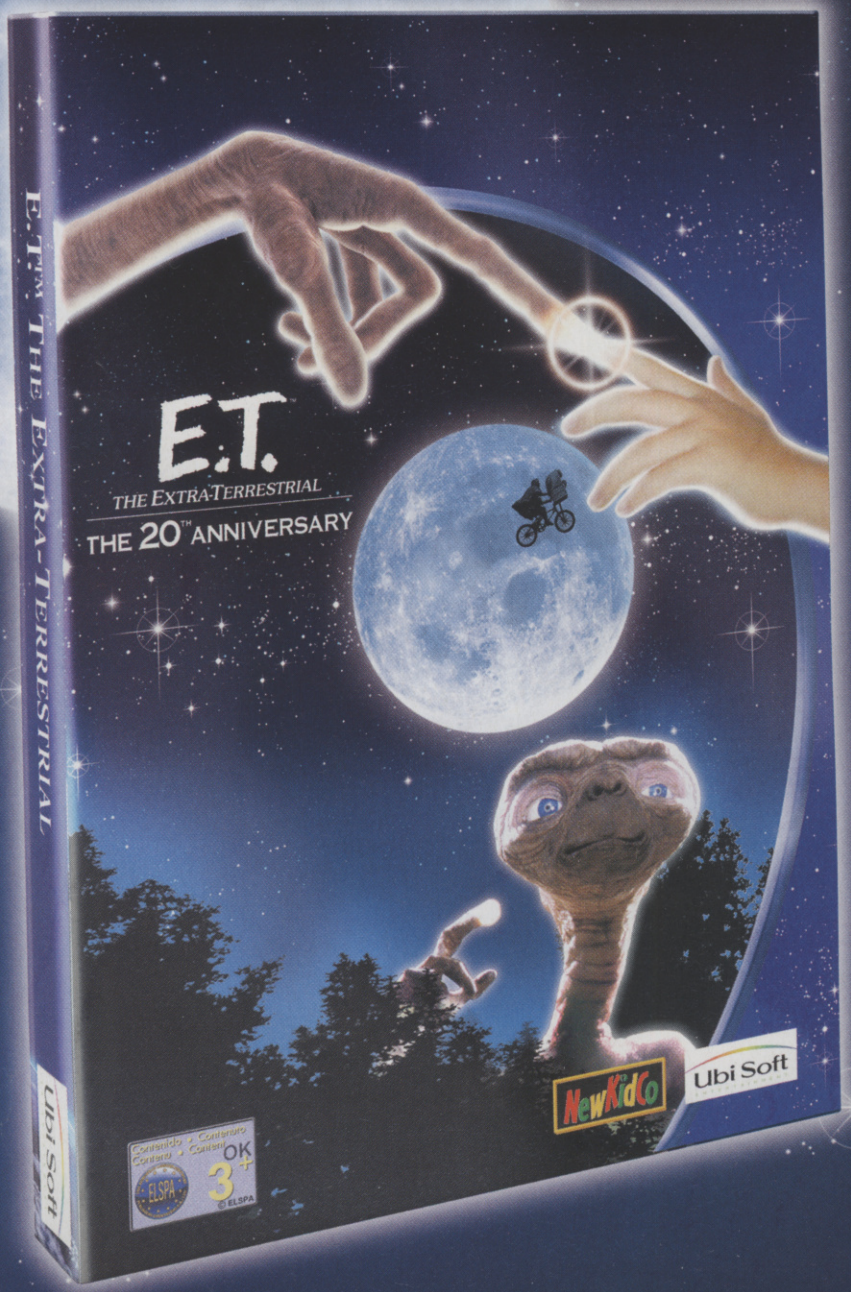
7

Transworld Surf
Players: 1-4
Catch a wave, clamber onto surfboard, try to pull off a ridiculously tough move, fall off, get angry. A rubbish surfing sim that's instantly forgettable.
Score: 3/10

Wreckless
Players: 1
Flashy visuals that look like you're playing a CG sequence help this mission-based racer shine. Shame there's no multiplayer though.
Score: 8/10

Experience the unforgettable Magic of E.T.

in out of this world video games



PlayStation

GAME BOY ADVANCE™

PC CD ROM

GAME BOY COLOR

Ubi Soft
ubisoft.com

NewKidCo
newkidco.com

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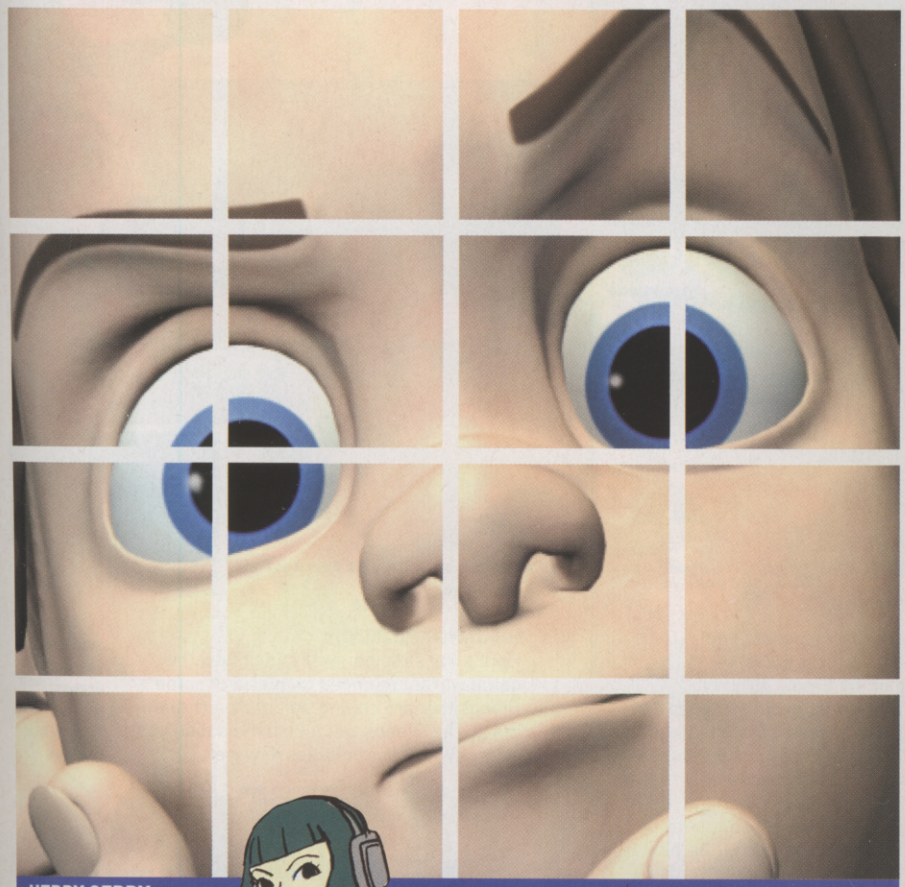
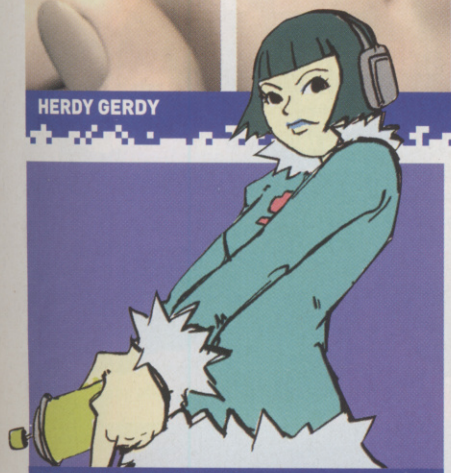
E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL
THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY
www.et20.com

Reviews

CVG, always here to guide you through the minefield of the month's newest releases



HERDY GERDY 76



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WHAT THE SCORES MEAN

1 – Argh, it stinks!
2 – Abysmal
3 – Sucks a fat one
4 – Pretty dire
5 – Very average
6 – Hmm, could be for you
7 – Pretty tasty
8 – Very good
9 – Essential
10 – An unmissable belter that defines the genre

CVG CLASSIC AWARD

CLASSIC CVG CLASSIC

Only given to the very best games, setting the benchmark others in the genre are compared against. An essential purchase for every gamer.

More fun than worrying sheep on a dark night...

Herdy Gerdy

COST: £44.99
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: CORE DESIGN
PUBLISHER: EIDOS

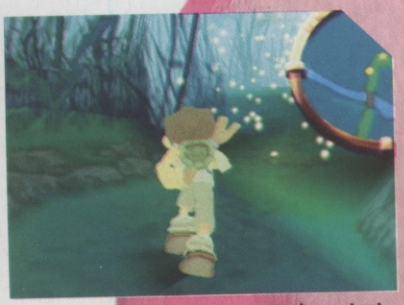
Never again will we mock the bearded men who whistle commands at their faithful dogs at the World Championship Working Sheepdog Trials. For Herdy Gerdy has taught us to respect the work of these dedicated welly-wearing shepherds, who are out doing their thang come rain or shine.

CREATURES EVERYWHERE!

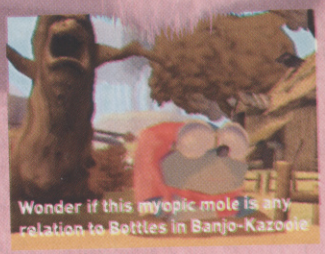
The basic way to clear each of the game's enormous, gorgeous stages is by herding, and the unique and original gameplay will leave you with a warm, furry feeling inside. By whatever means you have, it's your job to get the right type of fuzzy animals into the corresponding pen.

Most levels require a set amount of cute critters to be herded, in order to unlock a route to the next area. Some stages have specific challenges that must be met, or puzzles to solve, so you can open up new routes on the colossal world map. Either way, learning how each type of creature responds both to Gerdy and other creatures is the key to becoming King of the Crook.

There are ten different types of adorable and not-so-adorable animals to chase around the lush worlds. Some run away from Gerdy, some only respond to the right kind of item, and some, like the vicious Gromps, are constantly on the rampage, hoping to fill their pink bellies with whatever they come across – including you. The cleverest thing is the way the levels are designed with these different creature inter-relations in mind. Progress is non-linear – you can tackle each area's puzzles in the order you want.



The star on the map means an important character is waiting just ahead



Wonder if this myopic mole is any relation to Bottles in Banjo-Kazooie

Pen all of the creatures on every stage to gain special rewards

Watch your step as you gallop across these rickety old bridges

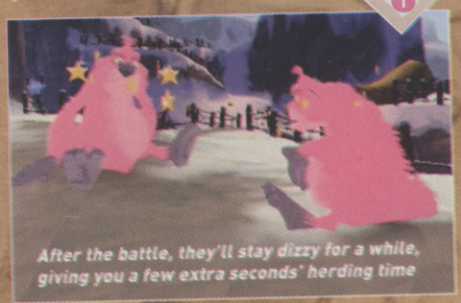
HERDING? PUZZLES?

Here's the simplest example of how the game works. You need to get rid of some Bleeps that are driving an old desert man crazy. The Bleeps will follow the sound of your newly acquired flute. However,

FLYING FUR

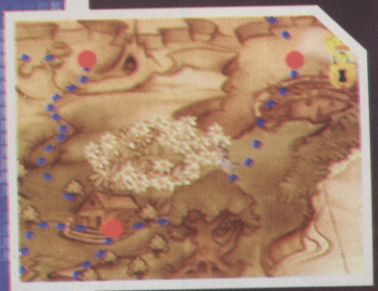
If you're surrounded by Gromps and don't have enough pens to trap them in, lead one Gromp towards another and they'll forget about chasing you and start rucking.

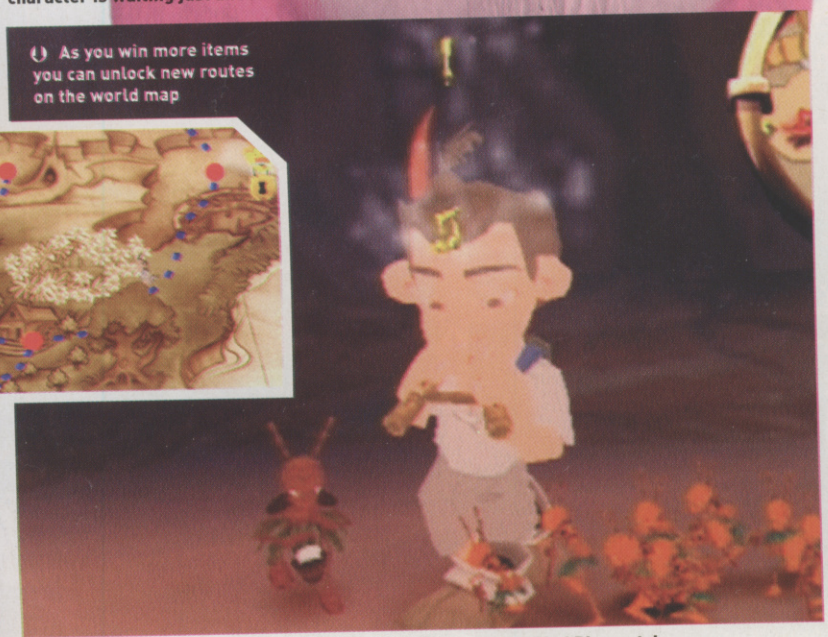
Pow! While the Gromps are busy, you can sneak some animals past



After the battle, they'll stay dizzy for a while, giving you a few extra seconds' herding time

As you win more items you can unlock new routes on the world map





Playing the flute will make most creatures follow Gerdy, Pied Piper-style

Give this bee's honey to a bear and a new route opens

Press Select to bring up the map and level status info

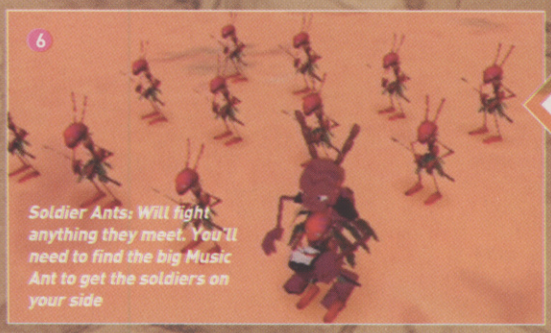
YOUR BESTIARY FRIEND

The creatures are undeniably cute, but learning their funny little ways is surprisingly tough. So for a head start, just check out our handy herding guide and gain maximum insight into what goes on in the crazy critters' furry wee minds. It's a fluffy revelation!

Doops: The most common. They run from Gerdy but are attracted to the herding stick

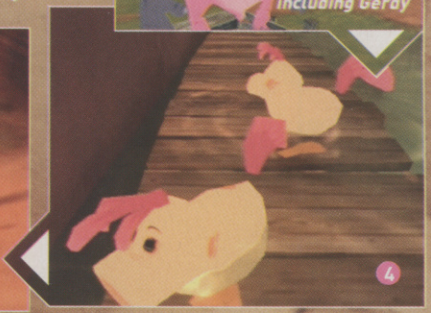
Bleeps: Love dancing to the tune of Gerdy's flute. Can't swim

Gromps: Pink but brutal. Anything that moves is food, including Gerdy

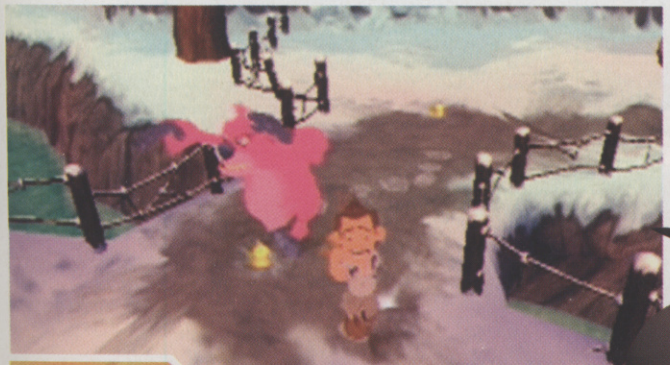


Soldier Ants: Will fight anything they meet. You'll need to find the big Music Ant to get the soldiers on your side

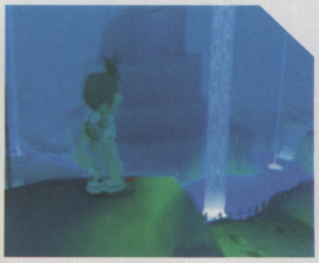
Honklings: Only hatch from eggs when Honks are around. Very timid



Honks: Found in water; follow Gerdy's flute. More common once you find the swimsuit



Soldier Ants attack all they meet



Help lay a troubled spirit to rest in Belder's Spring to secure a new item

The smell of fear! Check out Gerdy's terror when chased

Gromps prefer to chase creatures, rather than Gerdy

You can't tip the cows, but it's fun trying

CVG FACT

Want to cuddle a Gromp? Then keep a look out for Herdy Gerdy soft toys in the shops soon! For your little sister, of course

Rescue the miller's daughter and he'll let you explore the mill

A Gromp eats a Blurp and pukes. Ha!

before you Pied Piper the Bleeps away, you need to trap the Gromp lurking just round the corner. Get his attention and he'll chase you. Leg it towards a Gromp pen and he'll run into the trap. Then, with the Gromp imprisoned, you can safely move the Bleeps along.

Later levels mix things up with complex paths to follow, chasms to leap, and so many secret areas and alternative ways of penning the animals you could be at it all year and still find something fresh. Gerdy wins new items as you play and these can be used, platform-game style, to sniff out new surprises and entire new sections.

Herdy Gerdy is an enormous game, and a beautiful one. It starts off deceptively slow and simple, but once you start to grasp the subtle nuances of herding and start to experience the thrill of tricking those pesky pink Gromps, you'll be hooked. And that's when the game explodes before your eyes and transforms into an experience that's not to be missed.

CVG RECKONS

Original and beautiful, in gameplay, looks, sounds and how it makes you feel. Don't be put off by the 'kiddy' style – Herdy's hardcore and you'll be playing it for months. **Lee**

9

If you like this try these...
Pikmin (GameCube), Munch's Oddysee (Xbox)

100% PURE FREESTYLE.

Pants to the rule book. Freestyle instead. Go jib, bonk and spin on 80 jaw dropping, wide open runs. 'With more freedom than has ever appeared in any snowboarding game to date. And blessed with visuals that will make your eyes melt' according to CVG magazine. So, just grab some phat air, pull gnarly tricks and reap those high scores.

www.xbox.com/uk/amped

PLAY MORE. PLAY AMPED.™

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COST: **£29.99**
OUT: **8 MARCH**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**

Playing Phantasy Star Online is a truly landmark experience, which you owe to your gaming mojo. Sharing such worlds with friends from all over the globe is so exciting it makes your hair stand on end.

And Version 2.0 delivers the same thrills as the original, plus much more value. Beginners get to catch up while veterans can reap the rewards for their dedication so far. What's more, now that DC gets online with your choice of ISP, the wonders of this award-winning online universe can be explored without fear of enormous phone bills.

"I wanna be Grandmaster"

The forest spells doom

Want to know what it feels like to knock seven bells out of a Gillchich?

Phantasy Star Online V.2

Sign up now and we might just forgive you for being so slow

Real uglies only come out in the evening, to test the mettle of CVG readers in Ultimate Mode

You need to be hard to survive the Caves in Ultimate mode

I'M SO HARD I HURT MYSELF

Previously, the toughest difficulty setting was Very Hard mode, accessed after your character reached Level 60. The new Ultimate mode, beyond Level 80, isn't just a step up, it's a step beyond!

This is the last word in unforgiving enemies, but as a training ground for elite players it's something to be proud of if you can handle it. As ever, though, the best place to power up is when you're online with your buddies.

Online is also the only place you can try the Challenge and Battle modes. Challenges present new layouts of familiar areas to navigate, where you race your mates to the exit portal. There are six types of Battle game, all variations of kill or be killed. The most talked about is the one where all your abilities are handicapped to Level One, with only basic weapons to work with. But your biggest goal with v.2.0 is to explore the new Ruins area. Again, while this is accessible through Ultimate mode, you stand a much better chance finding friends online to take you there.

Hey ugly! Your flies are undone. And close your legs, would you – show some class!

You can only fight this awesome dragon if you're playing Ultimate mode in v.2.0!

CVG RECKONS

The definitive Dreamcast experience and a benchmark in the history of online console games. Paul

9

If you like this try this...
Diablo 2 (PC)

LOOK WHAT YOU'RE MISSING

New Mags, ultra 'Rares', and sports arenas where you can play football! PSO Version 2.0 is begging all Dreamcast owners to taste its wonders. Here's a small selection of shots, and we weren't even trying to make it look impressive...

With enough cash, you can change your costume whenever you like

Ruins on Ultimate mode: so scary and hard they will make you sob

Woa! No, not the dragon – the Master System Mag! You want it!

Jet Set Radio

If you think Michael Flatley's got feet of flames, just look at this!

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **MARCH 14**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA/SMILEBIT**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**

Flames erupt from the back of your skates, triggering an impressive explosive heat haze that looks like someone's poured petrol inside your TV and chucked in a match. Then trails of colour burn off your character, sparks crackling as you boost along a glowing electricity wire.

A giant bolt of next-gen power has been stuck up Jet Set's arse, resulting in a sequel that's packed with a lorry load of new eye-melting visual effects, stupidly smooth action, and immense maze-like environments. Only problem is, once you've hammered JSRF for a few hours, you'll realise that the developers have devoted too much attention to making this follow-up graphically gorgeous, without placing equal emphasis on driving the gameplay in an equally stunning new direction. Hardcore fans of the original DC game might also be miffed by the fact that JSRF has been dumbed down slightly for the masses.

LIVING ON THE EDGE

Like that of a high wire circus acrobat, most of your precious time is spent surfing, grinding and pulling off mad stunts between the multitudes of rails and wires that populate the huge landscapes in Jet Set. If this is what it's really like to live in Tokyo, we're buying a one-way ticket and hopping on the next plane.

Burn across the neon sign, then head up high along the electricity wires. Land a few tricks there, then grab a few cans, and boost like the badass that you (think) you are

The backgrounds are impressively animated and alive

SAYONARA, SITTING DUCK

If you played the first game, you'll undoubtedly have fond memories of standing in front of a giant wall, trying to string together loads of swirly analog stick movements in order to scrawl graffiti before helicopters and cops hunt you down. Well, this element has been taken out of the Xbox game. Now you just press a button to complete a tag. By removing this cool touch Smilebit has sucked out a fat chunk of tension that existed in the original game, because in JSRF you never have to stop moving.

But, on the flip side, the action is now brilliantly fast and the game flows with a greater degree of mesmerising slickness, so if it's more speed that you're after, rejoice. But if you like bowel-twisting tension, retreat into a corner and weep like a squealing baby because this sequel hasn't got any. Go on, run along now.

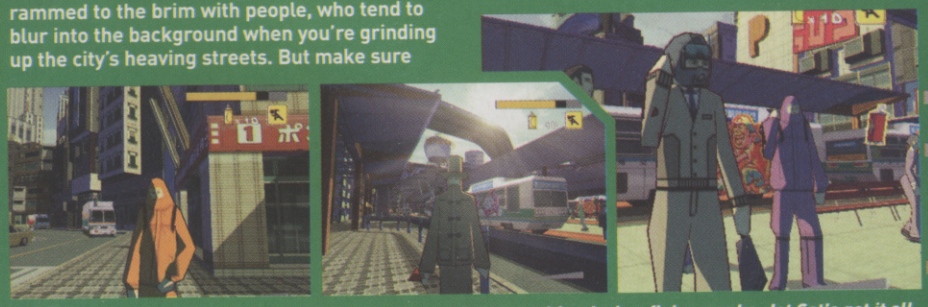
GO TARZAN IN TOKYO

The controls have been finely tuned for Xbox, so leaping around the concrete jungle and stringing combos of tricks together feels extremely natural, meaning

Live the vandal lifestyle to the hilt

CYBER CHIC FASHION FREAKS

The streets of Tokyo are almost permantently rammed to the brim with people, who tend to blur into the background when you're grinding up the city's heaving streets. But make sure you take time out: stop for a moment and check out some of the citizens' cool outfits. As these screens show, it'd be a shame to miss them.



From guys wearing biohazard suits, to Victorian gentlemen and freaks in a flying masks, Jet Set's got it all

Truth is, the multiplayer sucks a fat one

Future

Defy gravity and grind up telephone and electricity poles

Jet Set virgins will pick up the action in next to no time. And there are loads of spanking new tricks and stunts for you to link together, all over the manic metropolis. Now you can pull off bundles of funky moves as you grind along rails and tear along neon billboards, as well as when you're catching mega air. Plus, with a veritable army of vandals to unlock – a total of 25, each with his very own repertoire of slick tricks and graffiti licks – you're unlikely to get bored of busting up JSRF's sexy cel-shaded city in a hurry.

But what does get you yawning in less than a nanosecond is the multiplayer option. Don't get us wrong, a four-player mode is definitely the way forward, but the end result is a wasted opportunity of monumental proportion. Instead of being set free all over the luscious landscapes of Tokyo, you're stuck in tight blocky arenas, drab tunnels and other equally uninspiring locations. Plus the multiplayer games, like City Rush, Ball Hog and Tagger's Tag, are even duller than your multiplayer surroundings.

I FOUGHT THE LAW

One of your main battle confrontations takes place against a gang of missile-happy tanks, which are out to turn you into toast. So how do you take out a giant armoured tank? You cover it with a psychedelic lick of paint of course. Duh!

Eek – you're in trouble now

Get in close to avoid long-range fire

...and drown the driver in paint

Tag the tank's sides to disable it...

Grind through the gob of an enormous dragon

Redecorate, this time without the analog stick action

KEEPIN' IT IN A DC STYLEE

Still, it remains faithful to the original, the objectives and challenges throughout JSRF being pretty damn similar to those of Jet Set on DC, for example tagging over rival gang's graffiti, racing, chasing, and avoiding getting beaten to a pulp by psychotic cops. You can expect brand new set pieces and missions, like having to disable giant mechanical guns by spraying paint all over them and going head-to-head with a load of tanks, but it's unlikely that you'll be bowled over by any of the challenges that pop up along the way.

It's the game's lack of originality that proves the real disappointment. This sequel was a perfect opportunity for the developers to go crazy with the gameplay and come up with a blistering urban adventure that could match the quality of the visuals, but sadly no such innovations have been made.

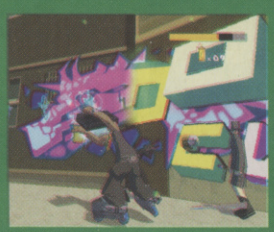
Despite these drawbacks, JSRF still manages to deliver a straightforward yet outrageously slick trick-packed arcade thrill that should more than satisfy extreme freaks and graphics whores alike.

CVG FACT

The happy smiley folk at Smilebit are also behind another highly anticipated upcoming Xbox title, Gunvalkyrie

MY NAME IS ...

Creating your own graffiti is loads easier than before and it feels great to see your artwork plastered all over the city. You're not confined to writing; you can draw too and you don't need to be Picasso to put together a decent piece. Try customising your tags.



Once you've created and saved your design, whip out your aerosol and spray it all over town

CVG RECKONS

It'll make your eyeballs orgasm but the gameplay's hardly advanced since the last game on DC. Mike

7

If you like this try this...
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (PS2)

RalliSport Challenge

Get really muddy, then plunge off a cliff!

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **MARCH 14**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **DIGITAL ILLUSIONS**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**

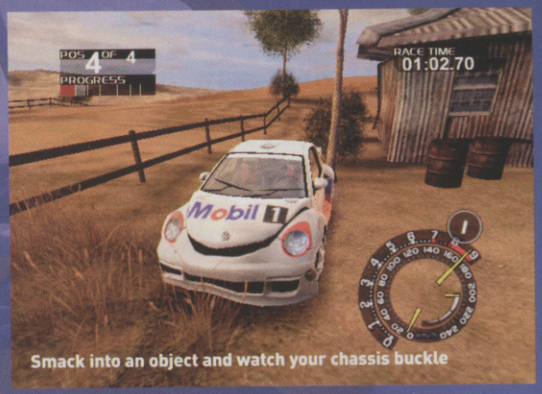
Cows watch as you blaze past and spray mud and grit into their faces, bump-mapped ice glistens and cracks as you power-slide across it. Next you're swerving off a mountain road into a huge boulder. It's almost impossible to flaw the graphics. However, the rallying action might be blisteringly quick, but there's nothing much in RSC that we haven't experienced elsewhere in the likes of GT3.

BUST YOUR ROCKS

This game's hard. It takes a good few hours to get to grips with the car physics, and the varying terrain and weather conditions significantly affect the driving experience – driving on wet mud is like racing on a soapy tiled floor.

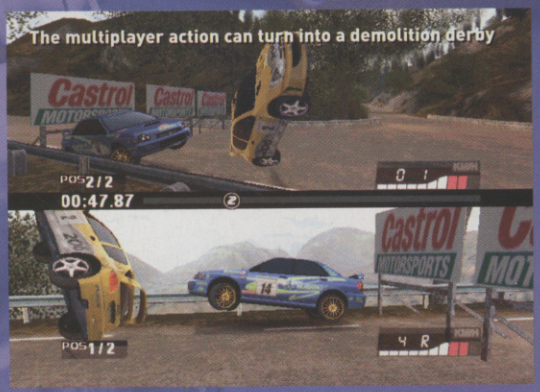
The handling has been designed to feel very realistic, and when you're leathering it around corners you have to wrestle hard to keep control and stay on track. But what's really irritating are the little rocks and boulders that litter the sidelines of almost every track – if you happen to clip even the tiniest of stones your car will flip stunt-like and crash, stripping you of precious seconds. Damn! Another feature that's sure to make your blood boil is the way that, if you stray more than a few yards off course, the screen will fade to black with no prior warning and place your car further back on the track.

But the rock hazards and blackouts don't outweigh RSC's great aspects. It's got all the events a rally fanatic could want, including Ice Racing, and a cool Hill Climb mode, plus a manic multiplayer option. It takes ages to crack through the whole game in Career mode, and most petrol-heads will be begging for more. A great stop-gap till Colin McRae 3.



Smack into an object and watch your chassis buckle

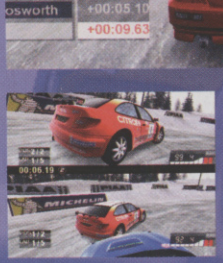
Fly off a cliff and into oblivion



The multiplayer action can turn into a demolition derby

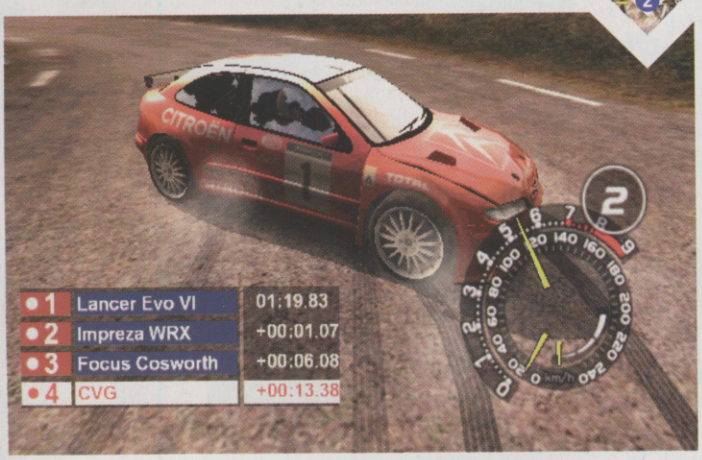
Brake too late and you could find yourself rolling down a hill

The ice effects are impressively realistic


This should be a Winter Olympics event!

RIDING THE KNIFE EDGE

One of the biggest thrills comes from tearing through the twisty mountainside Mediterranean racetracks, because staying on the road is nails when you're bolting along at 150mph. Don't take your eyes off the road here or your car will take a serious battering.



Your Citroen bounces back onto the tarmac and you skid to a halt, battered and bruised

CVG FACT

The developer Digital Illusions is also behind a few wacky cartoon escapades, including Disney's Dinosaur for PSone and Shrek on Xbox

CVG RECKONS

Rock-hard rally action that'll test your skills to their limits. Not too original, but the intensity and variety more than compensate. **Mike**

8

If you like this try this...
GT3 (PS2)

Star Wars Obi-Wan

The force is skanky in this one

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **LUCASARTS**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**

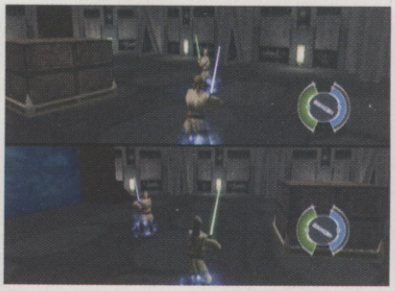
How cool would it be to own a real-life working lightsaber? It would be a hell of a way to show off – you could use it to take the tops off bottles at parties and arguments could be settled with a flash of the blade, the faint whiff of cauterised flesh and the thump of a neatly removed limb hitting the floor.

STRANGE COINCIDENCE?
Star Wars Obi-Wan was originally destined for PC, but it quickly became clear that Jedi Knight 2 was likely to blow it away, and Obi suddenly became an Xbox exclusive. Hmm, just coincidence probably. But coincidence or not, this game is taking you for a ride.

Controlling the lightsaber, combat and force powers with the right analog stick and shoulder buttons is cool, but this is the game's only gimmick. And, what's more, the rest of it is a botch job too. Add in flat textures, boring level construction and some terrible slowdown and it all combines to spoil what should have been one of the Xbox's finest launch moments.

Nice camera work

This should hit him square in the plums...



That was some curry they had last night

You might want to pay attention, Obi-Wan

The classic Darth Maul battle from Episode I is included

CVG RECKONS

Instead of smelling sweetly of Jedi coolness this stinks like a sweaty stormtrooper's costume. Les

4

If you like this try this...
Dynasty Warriors 3 (PS2)

Knockout Kings 2002

EA Sports discovers the fun factor at last

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **EA**
PUBLISHER: **EA**

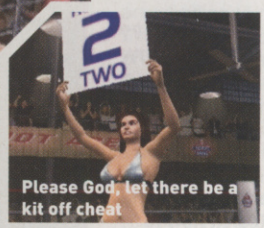
This is a moment in gaming history worth remembering, an EA Sports update that isn't just the same as the original with different stats. Knockout Kings has been taken back to the drawing board and turned into a fun slugfest – and this time it's not trying to be a serious boxing sim.

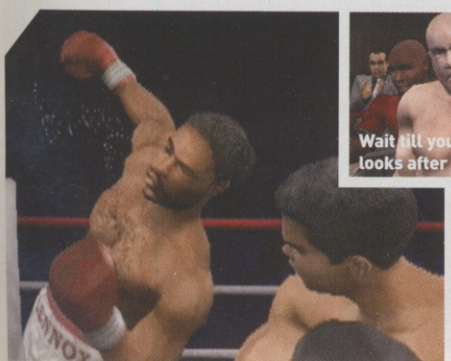
Gone are the tedious training sessions that only got in the way of the fights anyway; instead you get lightning-fast all-out ring wars. Realistic facial animations betray the pain inflicted by the punches you land, to the extent that you'll wince. And the more brutal gamer will relish the blood that sprays from the cuts and bruises that appear on the fighters.

With just Career and Exhibition modes on offer, the game sees you in the ring, sampling the brutal delights of the devastating combos, the bone-crunching uppercuts and the sneaky low blows and bitch slaps you can get away with four times per fight.

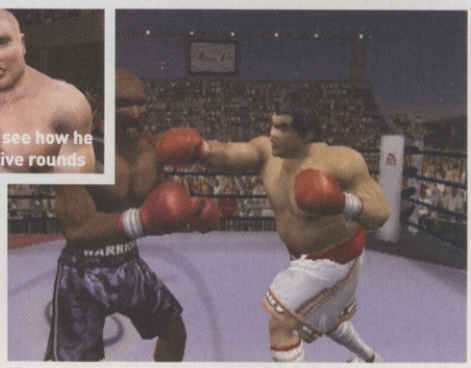
Knockout Kings has learned its lesson. With its mosh pit mentality and beefed-up speed, this is the most fun you can have with your fists on your PS2 without, er, some 'alternative' DVD movies.

The guard is down and that left hook is going to finish it





What'll happen to Lewis if he meets anyone good?



If this guy puts his weight behind a punch you're dead

CVG RECKONS

Gives the punch drunk series a new lease of life. Fun boxing that doesn't take itself too seriously, and is so much better for it. Les

7

If you like this try this...
Mike Tyson Boxing (GBA)

FIGHTING TALK

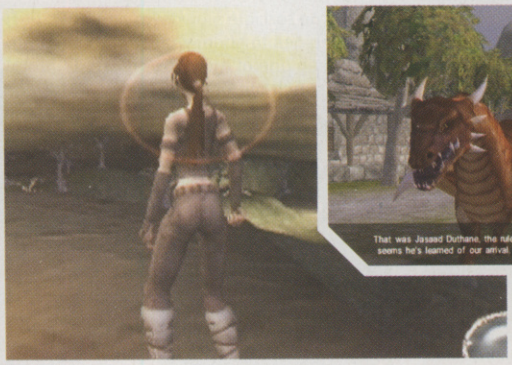
Drakan's combat system is simple to use and by and large a lot of fun. You can use swords, axes, maces and shields for hand-to-hand combat, using one button to attack and one to parry, and, in first-person mode, a variety of bows. Shame you can hide behind rocks, hitting an enemy while their attacks are deflected harmlessly away by the scenery.

Fight freely or go for one target during hand-to-hand combat

Use the roll button to avoid attacks and get behind the enemy

A number of simple combos can beef up your attacks

Try auto-tar or first-



Smile, Dragon, you're on camera. Work it, baby!

The lighting effects are like something out of GT3

Drakan: The Ancients'

The day when the flight simulator teams up with the RPG is nigh

COST: **£34.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **SURREAL SOFTWARE**
PUBLISHER: **SONY**

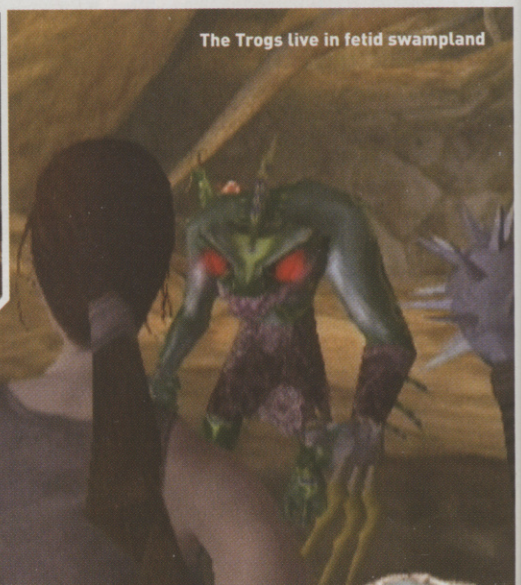
Riding a dragon is like riding a bicycle: once you've learnt how to do it, you'll never forget. Or so they say. Well, while we doubt the experience of playing dragon-flying role-playing game Drakan will stay with us until our dying day, it at least occupied our minds for a few fantasy-filled weekends.

Drakan is a sprawling third-person fantasy quest with a difference – you get to pilot a great big dragon. That's because you are sword-wielding babe Rynn, a kind of Lara Croft trussed up in leather armour who's friend to fire-breathing lizards. Not since Eddie Murphy in Dr. Dolittle 2 has a human had such a profitable relationship with beasts.

The story is this. The land of Drakan is under assault from an alien race known as the Desert Lords. Humanity's traditional allies, the Dragons, lie imprisoned beyond the four gates of the Ancients. It is your task as Rynn, with your Dragon friend Arokh, to open the gates and ensure our scaly fire-breathing friends can return to save the world.

The left stick moves your character while the right stick rotates the camera around you, enabling you to observe your

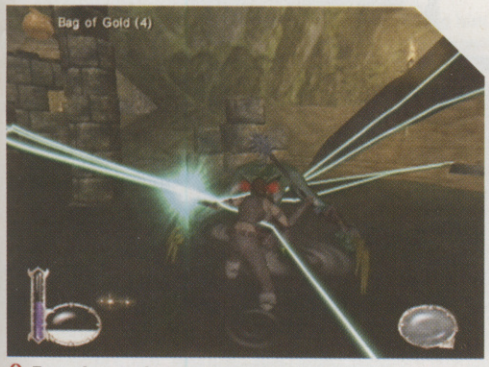
Kill enough foes and you'll level up



The Wartogs are a bunch of swine who well deserve death

You'll find space in your inventory is somewhat limited

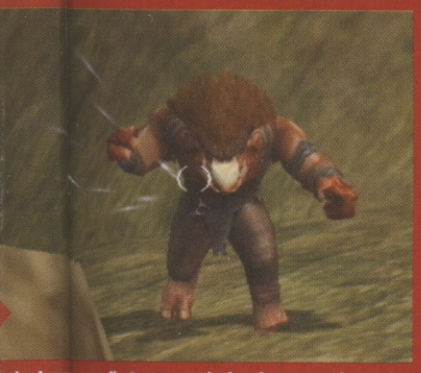
Make sure you check everything for cool hidden stuff



Trog shamen have a nasty electricity attack facility, so you better hope it doesn't start raining

Your quest will lead you into the heart of the Desert Lords' lair

When dragons attack...

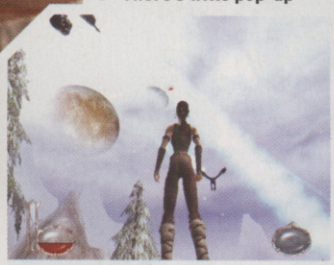


...uto-targ...g or first-person aiming for ranged attacks

Dragon combat can be a bit hit and miss, but it's still a lot of fun messing about your scaly fire-breathing friends

Health potion time

There's little pop-up



...Gates

surroundings with almost complete freedom. And what impressive surroundings they are too. Majestic panoramas of hills rolling into snow-capped mountains stretch out in all directions. You can see almost every peak, tree and tower from miles away. Flowers decorate the foothills, waterfalls cascade from cliff faces and the sun blinds you as you look towards it, sending hoops of lens flare across the screen.

LAND OF ADVENTURE

Despite Drakan's epic scale and massive environments, they've managed to inject character, detail and above all a great sense of drama into it all. No one location will blow you away like, say, Devil May Cry's did, but the more you see, the more you appreciate the effort they've put in.

Combat is a simple enough affair, relying on you to continually upgrade your weapons and armour to compete with ever-stronger monsters.

Skeletal warriors await in the dark catacombs

Magic is summoned by copying directions on the analog stick to invoke each spell. Having to perform these combo moves while under pressure in a scrap, as well as the way the game doesn't pause when you reach into your inventory for a healing potion, lend an extra edge to the combat.

TROGS AND WARTOGS

Most of the monsters you come across are a break from the norm, with hardly an orc or a goblin in sight. Instead there are the pig-like Wartogs, and destroying their besieging catapults with your dragon is one of the game's highlights. Then there are the swamp-dwelling Troglodytes with their lightning-firing shamen, and the Desert Lords, dimension-hopping undead sorcerers, and the cause of all this woe.

Kill enough of these rancid creatures and you'll gain an experience level. This gives you a skill point to improve your hand-to-hand combat, your ranged combat or your magical ability.

Meanwhile, the dragon-riding sections aren't going to rival Microsoft Flight Simulator for aerial thrills, but they provide an extra dimension that most RPGs don't. The controls are a little ungainly, though thankfully they've made it impossible to crash and dogfighting with other beasts of the air can be a top laugh.

Drakan will remind you of a number of other games. There's the Diablo or Baldur's Gate hardcore-RPG experience points and levelling-up system, then there are the exploring and jumping sections which will bring Lara Croft and her exploits to mind. But rather than making it feel derivative, it means there's always plenty of variety.

Despite its fantasy setting and traditional role-playing elements, most players will find Drakan: The Ancients' Gates easy enough to get into, and sufficiently action-packed to want to stay with it.

Terrain varies from arctic to desert

CVG FACT

Drakan: The Ancients' Gates is more than three times the size of its PC predecessor, Drakan: Order Of The Flame

CVG RECKONS

Gird your loins for a huge, many faced adventure that even goblin-phobes can enjoy. Steve O

8

If you like this try this...
Baldur's Gate (PC, PS2)

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If your ship takes too much damage it'll explode in flames

Just flog him to the fishmongers

Crabs aren't the only creatures you've got to worry about

The parrot doesn't look impressed

Pirates: The Legend Of Black Kat

Giant norks, man-sized crabs... that's about it

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **WESTWOOD STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **EA**

Plundering, parrot-fondling ponces. Pirates are generally nasty fat bloaters, but in The Legend Of Black Kat you get to slip into the stockings of a pirate of a different breed, sultry sword-swinging heroine, Katarina de Leon.

Pretty much everything about Legend Of Black Kat is flamboyantly large and exaggerated. But it soon becomes clear that the gameplay isn't that impressive.

Much of the action is spent running around massive islands locating treasure, fighting enormous crustacea and pirates, collecting new weapons, and solving simple puzzles along the way.

You sail around side by side in fights

Frag you, crabby!!!

Westwood Studios is also the brain behind the classic Command & Conquer series

CRAB AND SHIPS

The third-person action-adventuring element is pretty basic, but The Legend Of Black Kat is a game of two halves, as you spend much of your time swashbuckling on land and the rest of it engaged in fiery battles on the high seas. And this is where the coolest action is to be found: taking on small fleets of enemy ships, and ramming and bombing them to hell with cannons till they explode and sink. Admittedly it's utterly brainless and quite repetitive, but the arcade-style naval warfare is still a good laugh, and you can even go head to head with a mate and try to sink one another's vessels in the multiplayer Sea Battle mode.

Problem is, the novelty wears off pretty quickly in the single-player adventure, and unless you're a full-blooded seaman or addicted to action adventure games, the gameplay might be a little too shallow for most of you to stomach.

Use the mist to teleport around the map

CVG RECKONS

Neither the action-adventure nor sea combat element pack any serious punch. Mike

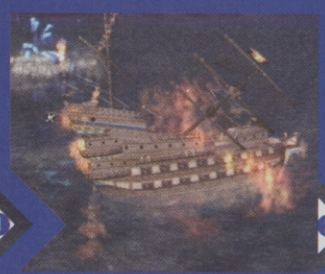
5

If you like this try these...
Drakan (PS2), Blood Wake (Xbox)

EAT MY BALLS OF STEEL

When you're not on land trading blows with bandana-wearing brutes and running around hunting for gold, you're on the high seas, blowing the crap out of anything that floats. But make sure you get into position quickly and attack enemy ships by getting side by side with them – it's a bit like dancing the tango – or you'll get sunk in no time.

Arrive on the scene in your spanking new vessel



Enemy fire kicks in and starts bombarding your hull

Before you know it your trusty ship's on fire...

Then boom! You and your crew are swimming with the fish

Shadow Hearts

Traces of Buffy and Angel populate this 'teenage' horro-RPG

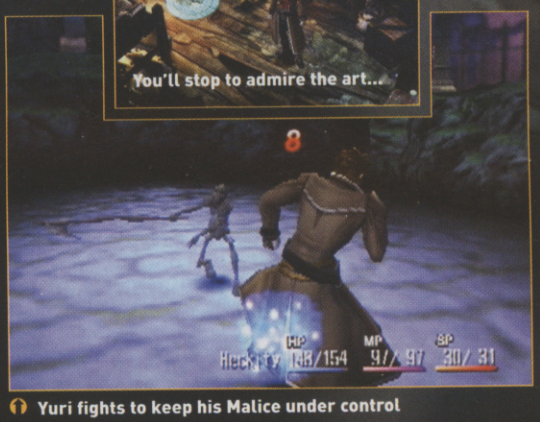
COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **MARCH 29**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **SACNOTH**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**

Events take a severe turn from the off! Whimsy leaves by the nearest window as Res Evil-calibre carnage takes place in a train carriage. Gruesome... and good! Next there's a battle between two guys who have the supernatural power of transforming into butt-ugly demons. Great! Better yet, one of them turns out to be your guy for the rest of the game. It's a terrific start, and sets the pace for one of the most oddball adventures CVG has had the task of undertaking. What a chore.

FAIRY-FREE ZONE

The main character is a swaggering tough-guy, Yuri. Well you'd be cocky too, if you could transform into demons to fight your battles. This ability marks Yuri as a Harmonixer, his extraordinary power is called Fusion, and, of course, it's rare.

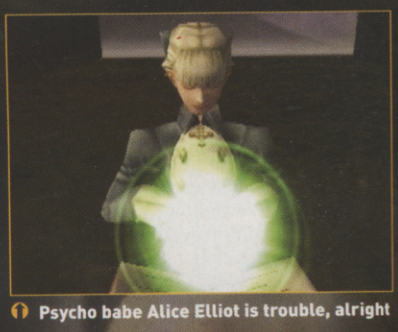
Guess where the guys at Sacnoth last worked (no prizes)



Yuri fights to keep his Malice under control

Like all heroes saddled with supernatural powers they'd rather not have, Yuri winds up involved in events surrounding the woes of another supernatural, a cutie named Alice Elliot. Though our main man is a force to be reckoned with, this girl is somehow the key to the Earth's destruction.

Against the backdrop of this fictitious twentieth century scenario, the Japanese Imperial Army is using its military power to prevent Chinese magicians from unlocking Alice's potential. All is thrown into upheaval when Yuri rescues Alice from an even more sinister third party – a magician whose name is so ridiculous we'd rather not utter it. Okay, it's Roger Bacon. The poor fellow's not the only one with a silly moniker, though: witness incidental characters like 'Cow Breast Mother' and 'Fidgety Pot-Bellied Man'.

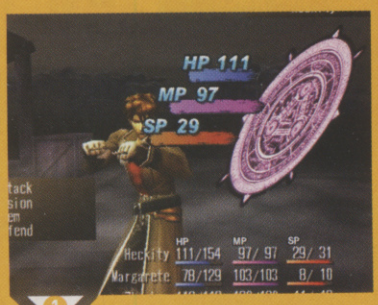


Psycho babe Alice Elliot is trouble, alright

FUNKY FIGHT FUSION

If the enemy looks like he's just gonna carry on standing while you continue falling, it's time to summon one of Yuri's alter-egos. This has shades of Final Fantasy's Guardian Forces all over it, but we'll forgive that because this is such a cool gag.

This guy isn't lying down. I need something a little more exotic this time



1

2

Fusion? Yeah, that's the ticket. Let's see the look on his face when I trigger this baby!

Warning: Tony the Tiger is not afraid of anything

4

This hurts my head more than seeing Darius on TV

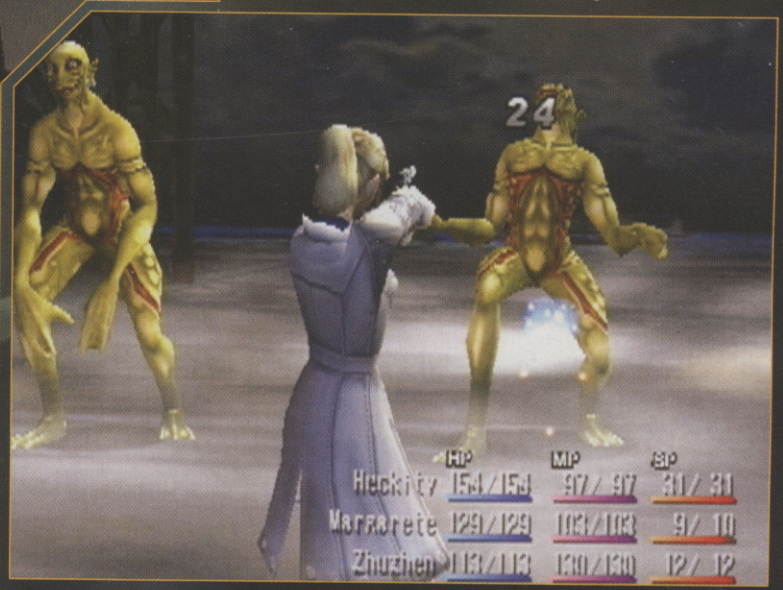
3

Now that's a much tastier selection of moves

5

Impressive, eh! One lump or... ooh... 12, 15 maybe?

The twisted imaginations behind the game frequently surprise



Sexy spy Margarete Zelle pulls out her gun

But stupid names are just one of many small niggles you'll find in Shaodw Hearts. The game's biggest problem is the regularity of ridiculous situations. For example, on one occasion, a ghost story is told by an old lady called Sea Mother. As the voice actor moans and groans you're praying nobody will walk in to the room to ask what the hell you're doing!

AND... NOW! AND... NOW! AND... D'OH!

Strangeness aside, Shadow Hearts has the hallmarks of an enjoyable role-player. At its core is a system dependent on a device called the Judgement Ring. This is mainly used to conduct moves during battle, but finds its way into most situations in which skill is necessary.

The Judgement Ring works like an analog stopwatch, with brightly-coloured sections called Hit Areas passed over by a thin 'hand' rotating clockwise. The idea is to stop the hand when it passes over the Hit Areas. The sections become narrower depending on the skill level required. For battle purposes, there is an even smaller section within each Hit Area, daring you to be even more precise or to miss the mark completely. If you're successful hitting these slivers of colour you stand a chance of getting a Perfect strike.

In every case a sense of timing is essential to your success, particularly when the number of Hit Areas per ring increases and the distance between them is staggered. In other situations, for example when retrieving an object, the Hit Area is so wide we'd have to disown you if you missed.

Hit all the areas of the Judgement Ring

Hit every line on the ring to score a perfect hit

CVG FACT

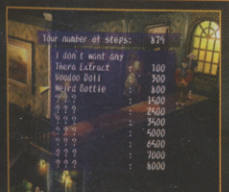
This is the second RPG from the team who created Koudelka for PSone, published just over a year ago

An unconventional way to deal with him

She only knows a couple of tricks

Overall, it's mostly the off-hand manner of the key characters that lends Shadow Hearts its special brand of cool. The situations they face and the cocky air in which they set about tackling them reminds us a lot of scenes in Angel or Buffy The Vampire Slayer.

You could say that the tone of the game is deliberately kooky while still allowing for exhilaration in the action scenes. Bearing this in mind, you're prepared to forgive the many screwballs, and enjoy Shadow Hearts like you would a worthy teen horror flick.



The pedometer allows you to save for goodies

Some areas look like they're from PSone

Add new monsters to your reference library

CVG RECKONS

Though it looks more like a PSone game at times, this is a stylish and fun FF-style escape. **Paul**

7

If you like this try this...
Final Fantasy IX (PS2)

Let the blood run free! Messy

Looks pretty, but surely Xbox could go one better and render exactly the same image in full 3D

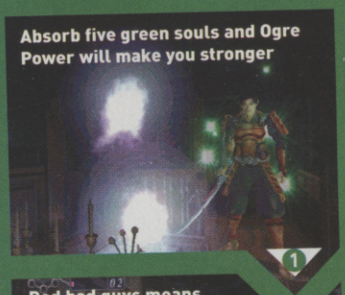
Try to suck souls for health wherever possible

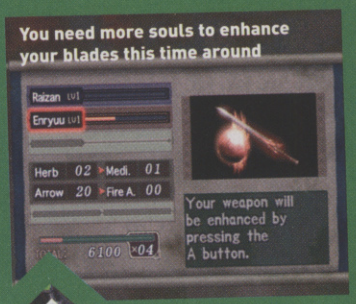
Burn enemies with your different types of magic

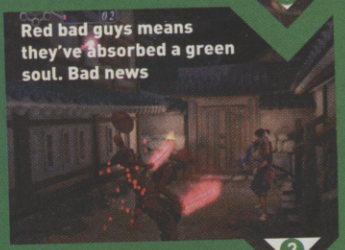
NEW AND IMPROVED?

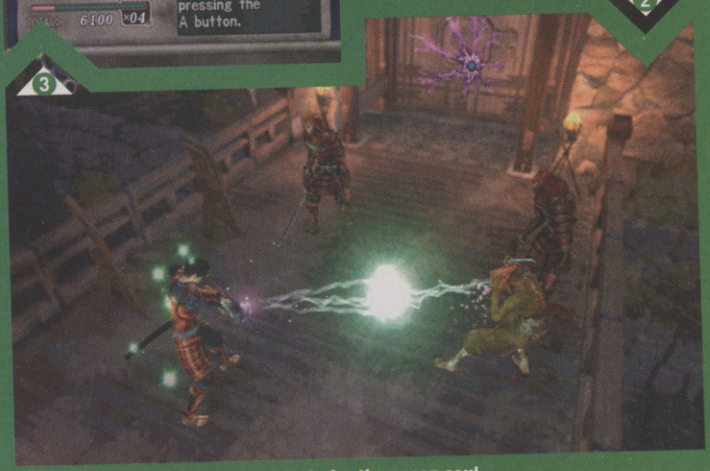
New additions have been made to Genma's gameplay, but unfortunately they are more likely to frustrate than thrill.

New green souls can be bagged to increase your power, but make sure you suck them before your foe does or you'll be in big trouble.









Hammer the 'suck' button to wrestle for the green soul

Genma Onimusha

No better, but no worse than the PS2 game. Huh

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM EUROSOFT**

Capcom has always been keen to stress that the Xbox remake of PS2's survival horror-style action adventure Genma Onimusha is a game for the hardcore player. To its credit, it's great to see the development team has really tried to address the criticism that the PS2 version was too easy. Therefore Genma Onimusha is now a toughie, but they've gone too far – it's now rock solid.

TUFF ENUFF

Enemies are hard as nails but striking them with your sword can unleash green souls that you can absorb for extra power. Unluckily for you, the enemy can do the same and when they do, they become even more aggro. By hammering the 'absorb souls' button you can play a tug-of-war over the green soul, but it leaves you vulnerable to attack from other monsters. More often than not you'll lose the soul and get twatted into the bargain.

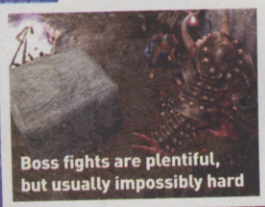
The ramped-up difficulty level means fights are even more unfair and really frustrating. Even the earliest rucks are epic battles that will have you dying and reloading your last save time and again.

CVG FACT

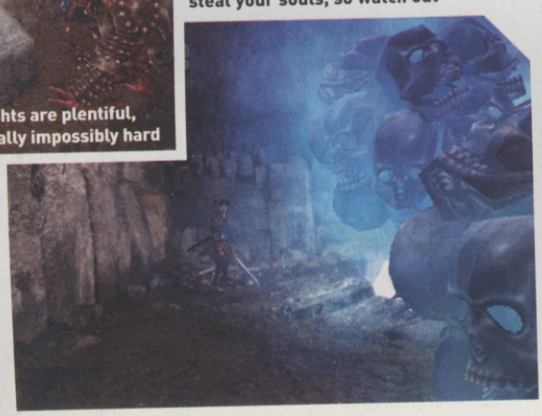
Ultimate Onimusha bad guy, Nobunaga, is actually based on a real-life figure from Japan's ancient past

Just one of the mad – and slightly cheesy – demons you'll encounter

Thankfully, if you foul it up once too often a special Easy mode is unlocked, the equivalent of Normal on PS2. But what's the point of a remake that's only enjoyable when doing exactly what it did in the original?



Boss fights are plentiful, but usually impossibly hard



These bunches of skulls will try to steal your souls, so watch out

You control this female ninja bird as the story runs

Get ready for battle!

CVG RECKONS

Hardly the leap that Xbox owners will be wanting, and it's stupidly difficult. Still a fine adventure. **Lee**

7

If you like this try this...
Resident Evil Code: Veronica (PS2)

Panzer Front Bis

Robot Wars with bloody great tanks

COST: **£19.99**
OUT: **APRIL**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **ENTERBRAIN**
PUBLISHER: **JVC**

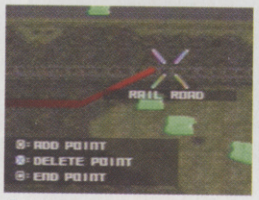
Oops. Well that's broke, then

Just off for a burger in town

There's no annoying Scouse presenter and not a beard in sight – doesn't sound like Robot Wars then, but it definitely feels like it. You get to design your own vehicles of mass destruction, but the difference is you get to blow the crap out of enemy tanks, depending on how well you prepare your strategy.

Compared to the original, this has new maps, machines and missions – everything you'd expect from a follow-up. But the real innovation is the ability to construct your own tanks from a load of spare parts, then roll the mechanical beasts onto the battlefield to see how they perform and stand up in the face of a hail of World War II lead. You can even design your own missions and objectives to test your friends' mettle, which makes this a huge advancement on the previous games.

There's no scrimping on the carnage either: explosions light up the screen every time your tank takes a direct hit. The addition of your crew shouting orders helps to create a great atmosphere too.



The strategy screen's important but boring to watch

Play this and watch Kelly's Heroes

Looks like the enemy saw you coming

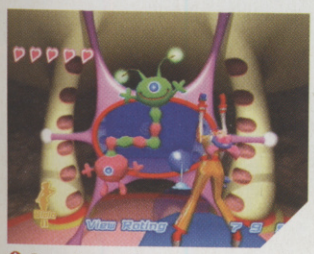
There is a slight downer, though – the strategy side of game is a bit off-putting, because you have to spend so much time honing a battle plan just to have a hope in hell's chance of making it through unscathed. Still, this has an explosive mix of strategy and carnage, that really requires perseverance to get the most out of it.

CVG RECKONS

Engaging cocktail of simple war-game strategy and balls-out blasting. Good, but not great. **Les**

7

If you like this try these...
Twisted Metal Black (PS2)


Boss dance-offs are a mad treat

Check our 80 per cent View Rating!

Space Channel 5.1

Cool as ever, but worth £40? Not Ula-likely

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
PUBLISHER: **SONY**

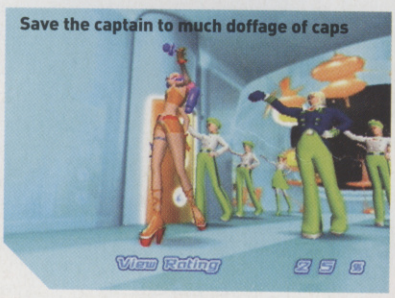
Shoot aliens with guns, rescue human hostages from the vicious alien hordes and enjoy the odd double-crossing plot-twist. Space Channel 5.1 could be any other sci-fi videogame, if it weren't for the all-singing, all-dancing choreographed rhythm-action gameplay.

STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE

It's the overall style of the game that makes Space Channel 5.1 so appealing. The visuals are lifted straight out of a Fifties vision of the future and the music is all luscious lounge-core grooves and laid-back funk. Rescued characters form a massive dancing posse behind your funkily-clad heroine Ulala, and if you save special hostages with your button-tapping skills, they'll even influence the way your troupe dances.

Unfortunately Space Channel 5.1 is ultimately just a novelty game. The 'Simon Says'-style gameplay is limited and you'll be playing for days rather than weeks, but as a quick funky hit it works well.

All in all, great fun, but it loses points for having no new features from the Dreamcast version and for being released at full price. Shame.



The Space Dive looks distressed at Ulala's moves

That's more a pelmet than a skirt

CVG RECKONS

Limited and short, but many will find it a blast while it lasts. A kitsch classic. **Lee**

6

If you like this try these...
Parappa The Rapper 2 (PS2)

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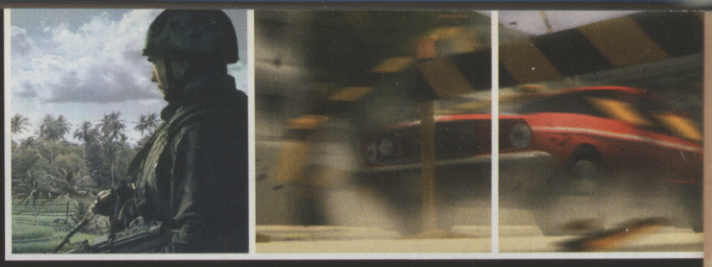

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Dynasty Warriors 3

Hmm, dysentry warriors more like

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **KOEI**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**

CVG FACT

DW3 is a real-time action version of turn-based strategy game Kessen 2. It features similarly named characters and the graphics are almost identical – only more people actually fight in Kessen

Be warned, your eyes are lying to you. They may be telling your brain that with this many fighters, blades flashing and bodies flying all over the place, the rucks you are about to embark on are going to be incredible. After all, how could such a formula fail?

Read on. In Dynasty Warriors the average level consists of running into a huge crowd of warriors, then violently mashing a button to hack and slash away at them, occasionally hitting a combo or special move button to break the monotony. Then, after you've slaughtered everyone, you look around and wonder why no one on your side bothered to help. Ah well, just run to the next group of fighters and repeat, which would be fine if your buddies came with you, but they don't. What's the point of having all these bodies on the screen if they don't actually do anything? Thank god for the co-op mode – at least that way you to get to see two people fighting at once.

CANDID CAMERA

The far from cutting-edge gameplay takes a turn for the worse when the camera zooms into the throbbing masses, cutting your body in half. It's frustrating fighting on a hill only to get crushed by a rolling rock that you couldn't see coming because the camera is in totally the wrong place. And it's not as if there are lots of places in the levels for the camera to get stuck in anyway – it's all so bland and lifeless that there is no excuse for it not being in the perfect position all the time.

It's obvious Koei has tried to improve on what has gone before, but dropping one turd on top of another doesn't make it any better – Dynasty Warriors 3 is just as flawed and mindless as the last game. The gameplay consists of mind-numbingly repetitive, button-mashing hack and slash action that presents little in the way of a challenge and requires luck more than judgement to get through the bland levels.

Quit the gymnastics, start lopping off heads

70 people slaughtered, no wonder you need a lie-down

Two players can go head to head or work together

Immersed in the deadly fog of war

No one's actually *doing* anything here

Knock him off his horse, then steal his ride

We've got *no* idea what's going on now

THE THREE BUTTON SHUFFLE

Kiss goodbye to the symbols on your joypad buttons. An hour on this will see them rubbed off for good. Koei says that DW3 features more combat options. Here's the whole game summed up in three shots.

Mash the square button loadsa times

A shower of light heralds the combo

Use the special move to carve up opponents

CVG RECKONS

Its looks are almost supermodel standard but strip away the veneer and you'll discover the fat old slapper underneath. Les

4

If you like this try this...
Maximo (PS2), Obi Wan (Xbox)

ORDER REF: P204XCVG

PUZZLELICIOUS

So just how puzzling is Ico really? Take a look at one of the typical conundrums that Ico encounters during the course of the game, and see what it takes to get through before you get stuck on the next one.

1 *How do you get out of this empty locked room?*

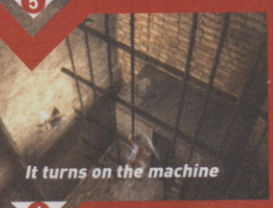
2 *Maybe this large machine holds the answer*

3 *Will climbing up a ladder shed some light?*

4 *Use the pipes to get around the top of the room*

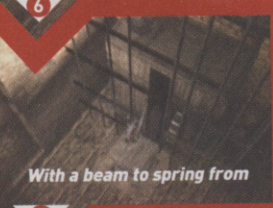
After several pipes, you'll reach a switch

5



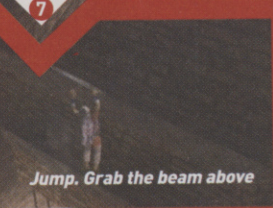
It turns on the machine

6



With a beam to spring from

7

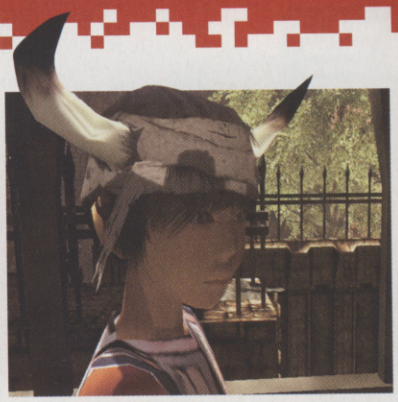


Jump. Grab the beam above

8

And find a window and ladder

Ico



The graphical style is unique and superb

Puzzles and princesses – but where's Mario?

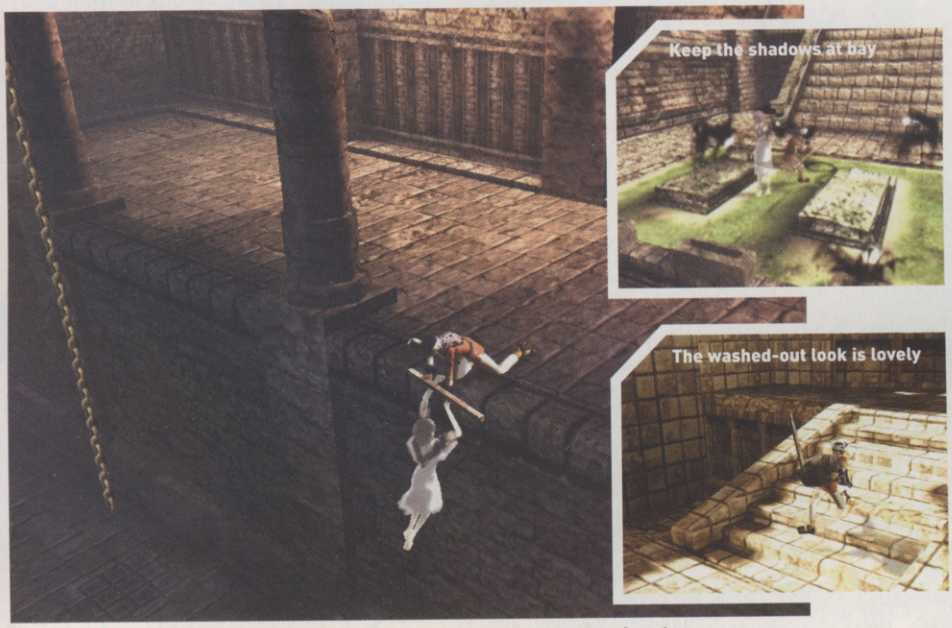
COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **MARCH 22**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **SONY**
PUBLISHER: **SONY**

Twelve-year-old Ico has been imprisoned. No, not for his comedy hat, but because he was born with horns on his head and as luck would have it, young bull-boys must be sacrificed to appease the gods. You play this ready-made god-meal, who must jump, climb and swing his way out of the huge castle in which he's been incarcerated.

But wait! Before he manages to escape Ico falls for a fit princess called Yorda, who is also shackled in the dungeons. Naturally, Ico attempts to woo her by busting her out of the cell, but inevitably things soon start to get sticky. Y'see, when Ico makes good his escape, Yorda follows. And because she's the typical hapless damsel in distress, it's up to you to save her candy ass.

Vertigo sufferers may want to look away from the screen

Escaping from the castle is no easy feat, and soon you're attacked by freakish Shadow Demons. These shady nasties try to drag Yorda off into an other-worldly portal, and if they succeed you can kiss goodbye to any chance of successfully completing the game. Yup, keeping Yorda alive is vital as she possesses a



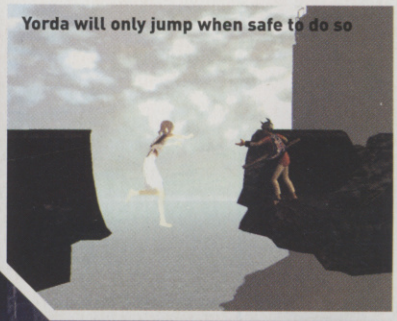
Keep the shadows at bay

The washed-out look is lovely

Ico often has to give Yorda a helping hand at climbing ledges and leaping chasms

Fighting a shadow demon. Have at you!

Ico's emotional, but not in a soppy way



Yorda will only jump when safe to do so

Behind bars, you must find a way to get Yorda through

Ghostly Yorda holds many secrets, but she's not telling. The way she speaks a different language and behaves as if she's in her own private universe is just one of the game's mysteries

supernatural power that enables you to reach new areas of the castle. But since she's not as agile as Ico, and cannot climb chains or walls, you have to use your puzzle-solving skills to create new routes through the castle for her, by opening doors and moving objects.

Even then she's not safe. Stray too far from Yorda, or leave her stranded by herself for too long and the pesky demons return and drag her off. Next she'll expect you to chuck your cloak over puddles so her stilettos don't get dirty.

SUM OF ALL FEARS

Everything about the game feels right. Escaping from the castle while looking after the princess is a straightforward concept you'll pick up in minutes. But it's the simple, intuitive controls that are the really refreshing change – there's only one attack button so the battles are easy to pick up. But this game ain't no pushover.

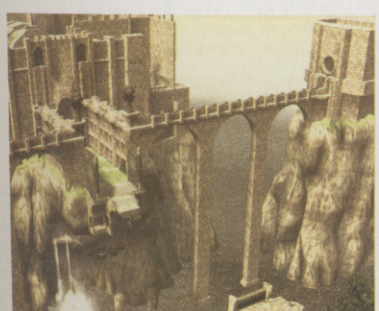
Cutscenes help create a magical and ethereal atmosphere

Take a seat and you get to save your game

Maybe Yorda's hiding from *that* tunic

Taking care of Yorda never becomes a chore

"We've got a wheely big problem here"



The environments are enormous – far bigger than anything else seen so far on PS2

CVG FACT

Ico has enjoyed a long development period, so long that it was originally planned for release on the PSone. Sony's loss is, or... Sony's gain!

Dynamic camera angles add drama to the action, but also provide clues to what you should do next. And the puzzles are in a field of their own: these are not your typical dumb videogame fodder where locating a key or switch to open a door is about as taxing as it gets. Nope, Ico's puzzles require lateral and logical thought to solve them, and success only comes from experimentation, feats of athletic dexterity and leaps of faith.

YOU BEAUTY

Graphically Ico is remarkable, not so much because it's technologically advanced, but simply because it looks gorgeous. Ico and Yorda are animated realistically, they move convincingly and their interaction with the environment is flawless. But it's the castle itself that's really the main character, boasting a wide variety of architecture and locations, all beautifully lit.

Scratches and neat distortion effects make the graphics look more realistic and, dare we say it, less like a game. It's a subtle technique that works extremely well, and compliments the subdued soundtrack that relies more on atmospheric sound effects than the usual musical accompaniment.

In fact 'ambient' is the best word to summarise Ico. The game possesses a dreamlike quality that will long be remembered after the last puzzle is solved. The only negative aspect is the short-ish playing time and lack of replay value. However, it's one of the most ambitious and beautiful games ever made and will be imitated ad infinitum. Proof that games are getting *so* good!

CVG RECKONS

Proof that a game can be a legitimate work of art. You'd be a fool to miss it.
Alex H

9

If you like this try this...
Prince Of Persia (PC)

Global Operations

Lacks the killer instinct of the other online assassins

COST: **£29.99**
OUT: **APRIL 5**
PLAYERS: **1-24**
DEVELOPER: **CRAVE**
PUBLISHER: **EA**

You're playing online, and your squad of elite SAS soldiers storm gung ho into a room. But standing in front of you is an angry mob of giant characters from Counter-Strike, Medal Of Honour and Return To Castle Wolfenstein. Tricky, yes? Well, Global Ops faces the same problem. Sure, it's one tough mofo, packed with blood, bullets and good hardcore gameplay ideas, but the competition is too good, and there are too many chinks in its armour.

SAY HELLO TO MY LI'L FRIEND

The first and most noticeable flaw in Global Ops concerns the visuals and maps, which are nowhere near the standard of its peers. In addition, the layout of the areas and the outdoor terrain is uninspired, and the background textures are weak. However, some missions are cool. One of the levels is a reprisal of the finale in the movie Scarface, but even here there are annoying ticks, such as if you fall in the swimming pool you die – and you're meant to be a trained killer!

Use a sniper rifle to cover your team

The character models don't compare to MOH or Wolfenstein

You get kitted out with some meaty tools

CVG FACT

Every weapon is modelled using exact digital images of the real guns, and the firing, loading and cocking sounds are all the actual recorded sounds of their real-life counterparts

LEARN A TRADE, SON

That said, there is good stuff in here. The character physics and the weapons are mint, and if you're a gun freak you'll pack your pants when you see the line-up.

This weapon is like one in Metal Gear 2

The fire effects are reasonable enough

I WANNA BE LIKE WOLF

Just like the multiplayer game in Return To Castle Wolfenstein, Global Ops is all about adopting a specific role, such as sniper, recon, or medic, and sticking to your chosen job for the greater good of your team and the mission as a whole. Sadly, that's where its favourable comparisons to Wolfenstein end.

Hold back and pick off the enemy as your squad storms into the breach

When you get hit, either wait for a medic and keep your weapons, or restart with fewer guns

Unlike in Counter-Strike, you have to choose what kind of soldier you want to be then earn money by killing folk to build up your arsenal – you can't just pick up a sniper rifle and become Lee Harvey Oswald. Also, there are more than 25 elite forces in the game, based on authentic groups, so there's loads of variety.

At the time we went to press, there were still a lot of bugs in Global Ops, which EA and Crave have promised to remedy. Even so, this shooter is no match for Counter-Strike or the other online killers out there.

The weapon animations look brilliantly realistic

Storm in and shoot the crap out of the enemy squad

CVG RECKONS

Packed with action and weapons, but let down by glaring flaws. **Mike**

6

If you like this try this...
Counter-Strike (PC)

www.gameboyadvance.co.uk

HEAVY HANDHELD COMBAT

ADVANCE WARS

"Advance Wars is supremely entertaining, it has all the frenzied addiction of a puzzle game, and is as enthralling as a good book. This is the game GBA was made for. Superb." EDGE©

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Watch out for toxic waste...

...And yellow snow for that matter

Dark Summit

It's just not as slicky as SSX Tricky

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**

If SSX is king then Dark Summit is the butler who got fired, lost his wife, his home and, as a result of this misfortune, now lives with cattle. This is mission-based snowboarding, rather than the usual racing-based action SSX fans will be used to. The problem is that these missions are so damn repetitive. Perform nine grabs, jump five gaps, complete ten combos... the list is endless. It starts off easy enough but you'll quickly find yourself bouncing round your room with frustration.

The game physics don't help to alleviate matters, as they're a shambles. Jumping feels more like floating, almost as if there's a lack of gravity. On the plus side you have to collect power-ups – these enable you to perform new tricks which are as easy as pie to learn once you've found them.

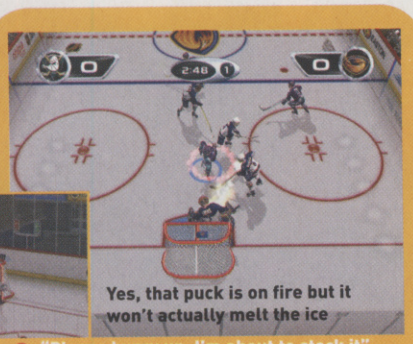
However, the levels are bland and graphically the game isn't up to scratch. The character animation isn't much better and even multiplayer is about as much fun as eating yellow snow. Stick to SSX.

4

Yikes – could be spare underpants time

Plough through snowmen and see their heads roll off

Just who was it who said blokes couldn't lay eggs?



"Please hurry up, I'm about to stack it"

Yes, that puck is on fire but it won't actually melt the ice

NHL HITZ 2002

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **BLACK BOX GAMES**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**

If you like ice skates, fisticuffs and little guys filling themselves out with extra padding then look no further, for NHL Hitz 2002 is here.

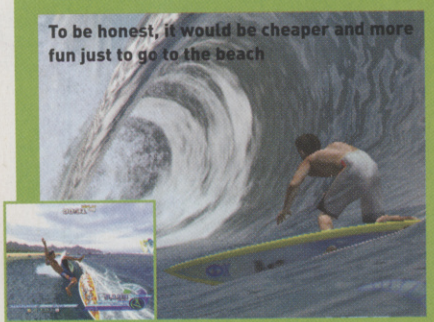
The controls are simple and graphically this is spot-on. It's fun too, and we guarantee you'll smirk after winning your first fight. And, to top it all, the whole thing moves quicker than a greased-up pig shot from a cannon.

Hitz isn't original and it doesn't mark a new era in ice hockey sims, but who gives a puck? This is as fun as they come and gives the EA Sports old boy NHL 2002 a slap across the back of its head with a hockey stick.

7

Transworld Surf

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **ANGEL STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**



To be honest, it would be cheaper and more fun just to go to the beach

Eek, here we go again – pesky waves

Have you ever had that strange feeling of deja vu? If not, you soon will when you have a go at Transworld Surf. Not surprising really – after all, how much can each level vary when they're all made entirely from water? Just how different can each wave look from the last?

The obvious and only answer is not very, which means Transworld Surf quickly becomes boring and repetitive. You could try to deliberately get yourself eaten by sharks, but even that isn't much fun because it's almost as hard as landing a trick. Still, the water effects are pretty.

3

Simpsons Road Rage

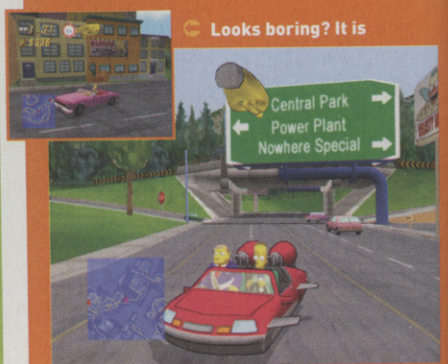
COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **MARCH 29**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT**
PUBLISHER: **EA**

Crazy Taxi rip-off Simpsons Road Rage looks and plays exactly the same as it did on PS2. The handling of the vehicles is still hypersensitive and we can't help thinking that the whole cel-shading thing is wearing a bit thin now.

There's only so much fun in knocking things down. And the mission mode lacks any kind of imagination, quickly becoming dull. Shame.

5

Looks boring? It is



Quite frankly, if you turn left, right, up or down you end up nowhere special

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **NEVERSOFT**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**

The Oil Rig is the new exclusive level

Skating on Xbox – excellent!

Tony and Co. are bringing their baggy-trousered, kickflipping fun to Xbox and it's nice to see little has changed since their PS2 outing. The level goals are identical to those on PS2 and the control system is uncannily similar.

However, the Xbox pad isn't as comfortable when attempting blistering combos and as a result lets the game down. The Park Editor is here in all its glory, as is the create-a-skater mode. With tweaked visuals and an exclusive Xbox level thrown in for good measure, there's no reason why you shouldn't own this slice of gaming heaven.

9

Blood Wake

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **STORMFRONT STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**

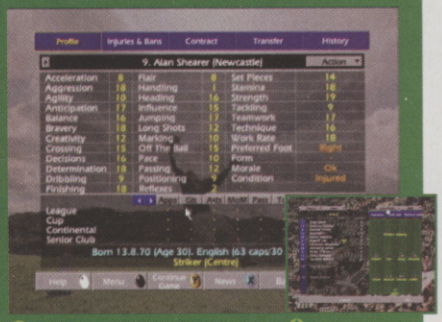
If nothing else, Blood Wake looks really fantastic, with jaw-dropping wave effects so real you can almost feel your stomach lurch and churn as the boat rises and falls.

Other than the eye candy it's a very run-of-the-mill arcade shooter. Blowing up enemy ships is quite rewarding and cresting off rocks at full throttle is surprisingly fun, but Blood Wake relies on good looks over gameplay to grab your attention, and that breaks one of the first rules of gaming.

5

Pass the sickbag

Maybe if you concentrate on the pretty lighting, you might not throw up



Player stats are some of the most detailed we've seen

Look ma, I've gone 4-4-2

Champion Manager Season 01/02

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **SPORTS INTERACTIVE**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**

If you eat, sleep and breathe football this is for you; if you simply don't, then stop reading now. Still with us?

This is Champ Manager's first attempt at cracking the console market. Everything an armchair manager could dream of is here. It's slap-bang up-to-date, complete with 26 playable leagues and tons of player stats and histories. You can even appeal against bans and send players away to surgery to fix those injuries that always crop up on cup final day. Own an Xbox? Then go buy this.

8

Sid Meier's Sim Golf

Not quite as dull as it sounds. Good thing too

COST: **£29.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **FIRAXIS**
PUBLISHER: **EA**

If running an entire city sounds too stressful or just plain boring then why not start with something less high maintenance? How about turning an overgrown garden with an allotment attached into a championship golf course in a bid to attract star players and big tournaments – it can't be as hardcore as dealing with crime and transport. As a bonus you also get to design a golf pro to enter in tournaments and win cash to spend on your own place.

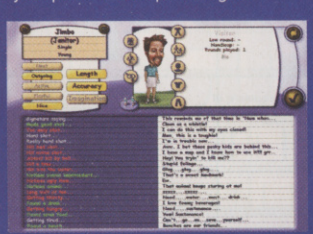
Sid Meier's Sim Golf may not look like much on first glance, but you get out of this exactly what you put in. So spend ages designing great holes on your course and you'll get the kick of seeing it attracting more people.

If your idea of a fun gaming session involves winning wars single-handedly or gunning down invading alien hordes, then you're way off the mark here. But if you like to use that blob of grey matter between your ears for more than choosing what burger combo to get in McDonalds, then you'll find this has surprising depth.

6

Check out what your customers think of your designs

Courses in the desert have plenty of bunkers, naturally



Do you really want to rely on this guy to win you money?

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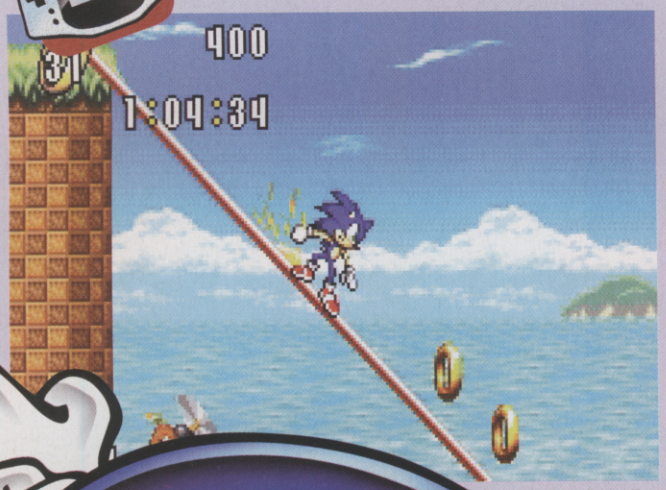
HANDHEL

CVG'S INDISPENSABLE GUIDE TO THE BEST WAYS TO KEEP YOU

SONIC ADVANCE 2

COST: **£34.99** PLAYERS: **1-4** OUT: **MARCH 8** DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM** PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**



Ride the rail to victory!

In the real world hedgehogs are brown, slow and prone to exploding when you run them over. They are so idiotic they crawl into bonfires to hibernate and get flame-grilled when the pyre is burned. They are a host to fleas and parasites and you couldn't even get a decent meal off one. Pointless, one might say.

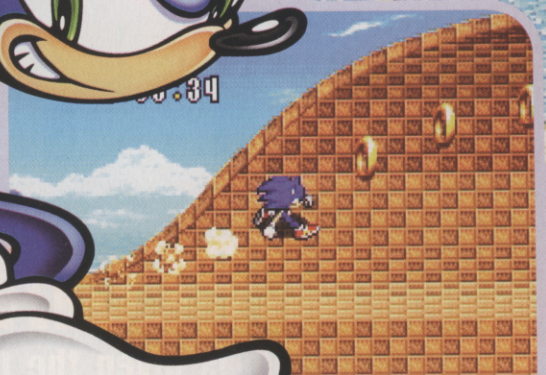
Thankfully, studies into the world of videogame hedgehoggery yield far more exciting results. Witness unprecedented speed, golden rings aplenty and more attitude than a whole gaggle of extreme sports 'dudes' in this terrific new Sonic adventure.

TURN THE AIR BLUE

It's like next-gen never happened, but in a good way. Choose from the four speedy heroes – Sonic, Amy, Tails and Knuckles – and explore vast levels that scroll in every direction at incredible speed. Each character has slightly different skills and attacks: Sonic's spin makes him the fastest, while Amy destroys obstacles with her mallet and Knuckles and Tails hover and fly respectively.

Each stage is a relatively simple race to the end, but playing as different heroes makes for gameplay that varies slightly from one

Knuckles can glide around the levels as well as punch enemies



These side-on ramps are fun

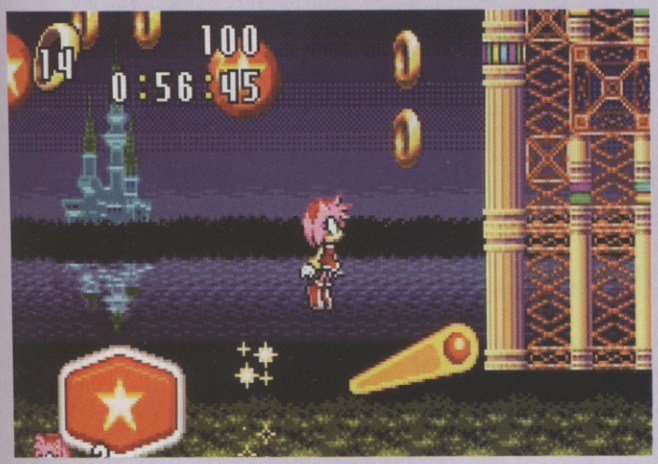
The classic loops look super-sexy at the high speeds of GBA

LDS

OUR HANDS BUSY

The boy genius thinks his way onto GBA. Platform pleasures or cash-in crud? Find out in our review

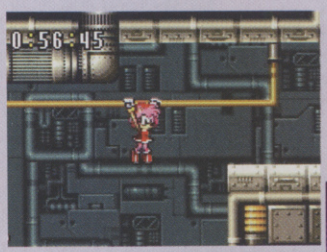
Can one of gaming's oldest heroes enter the hearts of today's more discerning gamer? Full preview inside



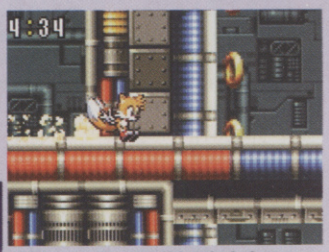
Flip out with Amy in the casino-themed zone

character to the next. Your goal is always the same – collect as many rings as possible and get to the goal before facing the boss – but how you choose to play is up to you. You can go for the fastest time, the most rings, or all-out exploration – there's no right or wrong way here.

There's also one secret springboard hidden away in each zone and if you find and activate it you're treated to a fantastic pseudo-3D bonus stage. Collect the Chaos emerald at the end of each bonus round to complete the game properly and unlock Super Sonic. It's like all the other Sonic games, but that's no bad thing.



Hang from or glide along rails

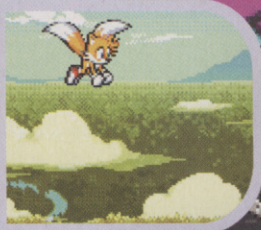


Tails may be small but he's fast

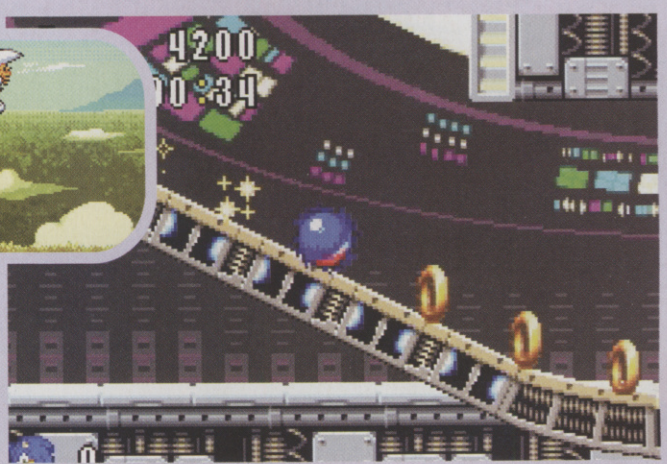
Jump into the bowl for a quick spin to access new areas

Take a trip to the Tiny Chao Garden to pet your creature

The Chao mini-games are limited fun, but still funky



Tails uses his... tails



Graphics are stylish and thankfully bright – nice one

The mechanical bees of doom have got their stings set on your ass

Sonic Team's also kindly included a load of multiplayer games, such as race games and ring-collecting challenges for up to four players. You can even hook up an Advance to GameCube, to use the Tiny Chao Garden to train your Chao creatures, then make them race and battle on 'Cube. Sweet.

As a game that favours speed and style over secrets and pure skill, this is a totally different type of platformer from Mario Advance 2 and it clearly lacks the depth and rare genius of Mario's games. Once again, the 'hog has to make do with second position.

8

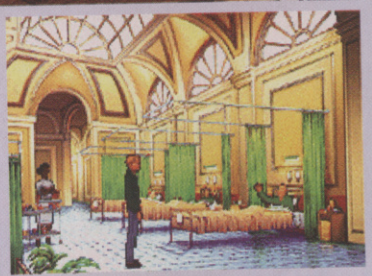
BROKEN SWORD: THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLARS

COST: **£29.99** PLAYERS: **1** OUT: **MARCH 22** DEVELOPER: **REVOLUTION** PUBLISHER: **BAM!**

Investigating an international conspiracy is a tricky trade-off. On the one hand you're risking your life on a dangerous quest, where no one believes they're in grave peril and there isn't a soul you can trust. On the other hand you get to travel the world, chat up the local honeys and act like a hero. Best pack the cool shades and sun lotion.

He's holy, but can you trust him?

Cause a distraction to get behind the bar in Ireland

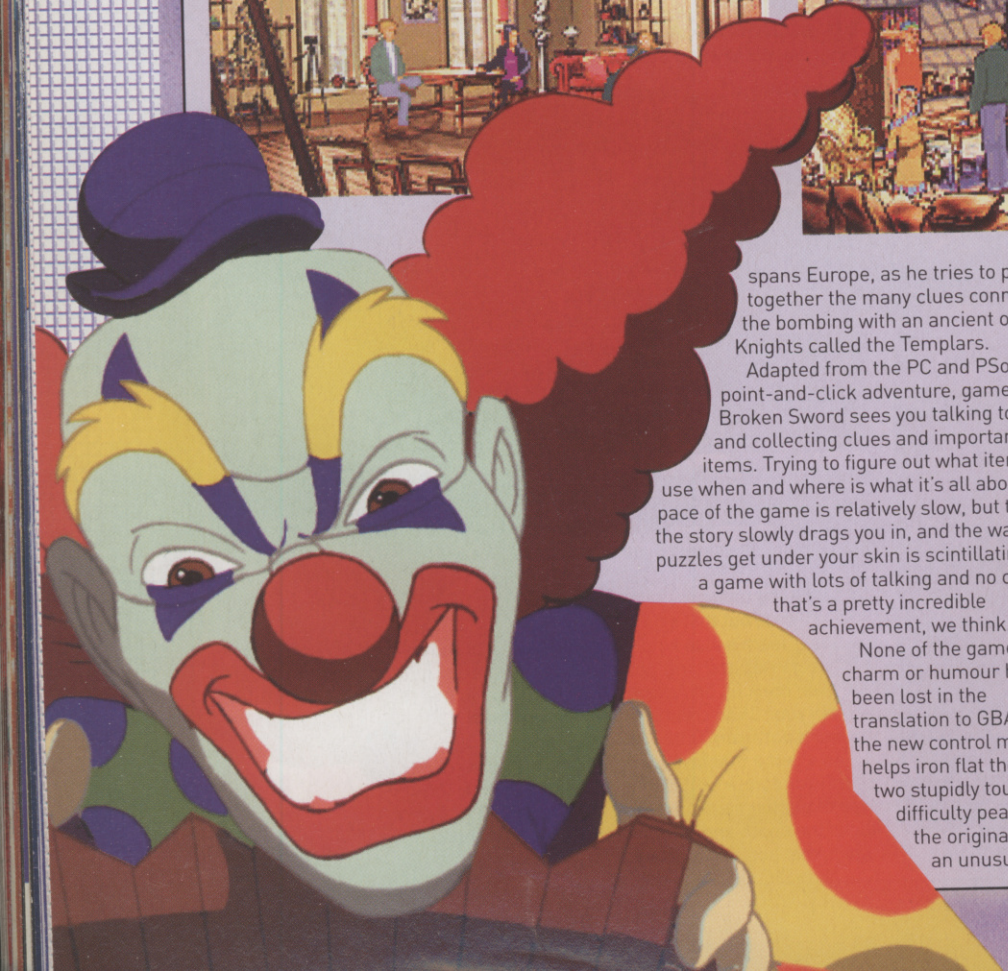


Conversations are lengthy – take the weight off

Journey to Syria and have a good haggle at the markets

You have to interrogate poor sickly folk

Characters are full of life, thanks to the ace animation



SHIRLEY TEMPLAR

Broken Sword plays like a kind of interactive mystery novel, with a little comedy and a whole load of European class. You play George Stobbart, an American on holiday in Paris. After witnessing a bomb blast in a quiet cafe, George becomes embroiled in a mystery that spans Europe, as he tries to piece together the many clues connecting the bombing with an ancient order of Knights called the Templars.

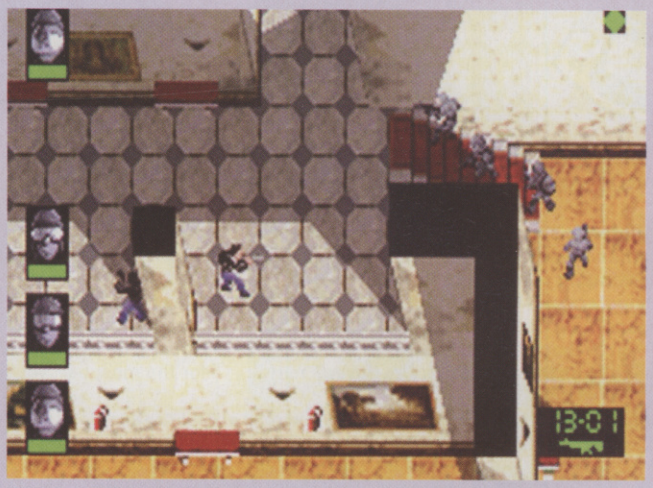
Adapted from the PC and PSone point-and-click adventure, gameplay in Broken Sword sees you talking to locals and collecting clues and important items. Trying to figure out what item to use when and where is what it's all about. The pace of the game is relatively slow, but the way the story slowly drags you in, and the way the puzzles get under your skin is scintillating. For a game with lots of talking and no combat, that's a pretty incredible achievement, we think.

None of the game's charm or humour has been lost in the translation to GBA, and the new control method helps iron flat the one or two stupidly tough difficulty peaks of the original. It's got an unusual style and it's a brilliant and brave choice to convert to GBA. Broken Sword is the best kind of interactive mystery, with gorgeous locations, cunning puzzles and an intricately plotted story. On GBA at least, it's original, brilliant and totally worthy of your cash.

Do a 'hotspot' search to find interactive, er, hotspots

9

Let your team-mates die and you'll find yourself underpowered



Stick to the shadows for more chance of avoiding detection

ROGUE SPEAR

COST: **£29.99** PLAYERS: **1-4** OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **UBI STUDIOS** PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**

Rogue Spear is a lot like a team-based Metal Gear, which is a very good thing indeed. Based on the tactical team-based PC games, you get to rescue hostages and neutralise hostile situations in a variety of extra-cool and super-tough missions.

Top tanker action – just a shame you can't get in and steal it

Remember to select the right kind of cammo for the terrain

Graphics are detailed, if small

Kill men in derelict toilets for fun

I'VE GOT THE SQUADS

Choose your squad according to the mission parameters, then get to work. Enemy AI is respectable and your team-mates behave pretty logically, especially when you give them commands. There are great speech samples, excellent music and decent visuals too, but the learning curve is steep, so prepare for a tough challenge.

On GBA Rogue Spear is original and works brilliantly. It's totally engrossing, and the tactical play feels like a breath of fresh air among all the generic games currently clogging up the shelves. Great stuff.

8

CAESARS PALACE ADVANCE

COST: **£34.99** PLAYERS: **1** OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **PIPE DREAM INTERACTIVE** PUBLISHER: **THQ**

Realism sucks – why couldn't this table be prettier?

We hate the fact there's no apostrophe in the word 'Caesars'

Insert coin here for maximum boredom possible

Gambling's got that grubby feeling that we really like. It's sort of naughty and not always legal, and therefore instantly cool. Caesars Palace wants to recreate the Vegas casino gambling experience but doesn't do a great job of it.

Aside from the miserable visuals and idiotic sound effects, there's simply not enough fun to be had while playing. We don't expect money to come gushing out of our GBAs when we win, but the completely dead-pan way the games are presented makes this a total bore for everyone other than real casino freaks.

4

DARK ARENA

COST: **£34.99** PLAYERS: **1-4** OUT: **NOW** DEVELOPER: **GRAPHIC STATE** PUBLISHER: **THQ**

Nintendo's handheld cutie pie has shaken off its squeaky clean image with the recent onslaught of hardcore first-person shooters and become a playground for guns, guts and gore. Dark Arena is its latest trigger-happy treat, but is it in the same league as Doom and Ecks Vs Sever? Yes!

POINT AND SHOOT ADVENTURE

Shooters have never been renowned for testing your little grey cells, and Dark Arena is no different in that respect. There are a few switches and keys to find on your journey through the 20 Dark Arena environments, but for the most part you'll need all the brainpower of a lobotomised gerbil, because the skill of Dark Arena is all in the fingers – you'll have to possess a set of fast and skilful digits if you want to stay alive. Fine by us! Anyway, who wants to be traipsing around aimlessly, solving puzzles, when you could be pumping hundreds of 55mm miniature self-powered rockets into the faces of hordes of oncoming mutants?

Where Dark Arena *almost* loses a point is in the fact that the environments are reasonably sparse, making it less visually impressive than its rivals. However, both the single and multiplayer action is slick, quick and tough enough to compensate for this little foible.

So if you enjoy the subtle art of mass-killing, this should be right up your street.

8

Some of the environments may be drab, but you can be sure they'll be packed with killers

One of your enemies looks like he's the lovechild of RoboCop and Jason from Friday The 13th. Not pretty

"Good evening, sir. Come this way for certain death!"

Shoot the scaly slug-like reptile in the gut, quick!

"You've got a bogey on your ass!" Well, that's just charming language, isn't it?

Lock onto an enemy then let the missiles flow

Water everywhere! The environment is painfully dull

Taking off and landing on the aircraft carrier is stupidly easy

F-14 TOMCAT

COST: **£34.99** PLAYERS: **1-4** OUT: **NOW** DEVELOPER: **VIRTUCRAFT** PUBLISHER: **THQ**

It's been a long time coming and now it's finally here we can barely contain our excitement. Oops, sorry wrong game, that's Super Mario Advance 2. There's not a mushroom or turtle in sight in F-14 Tomcat, but the endless landscape of water on every level is enough to turn you greener than Yoshi with seasickness.

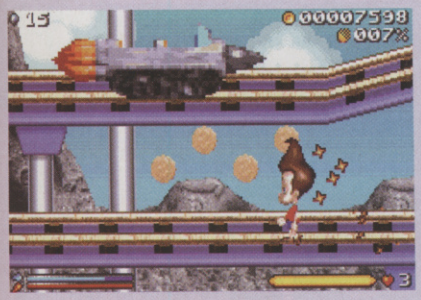
BOMB THE BASE

The gameplay couldn't be simpler: you're strapped into the cockpit of a multi-million pound jet and sent out on missions to destroy bundles of enemy targets. Equipped with some heavyweight weapons, like Tomahawk Missiles and a Vulcan 20mm Cannon, the game sees you dogfighting the likes of Blackbird aircrafts and bombing the crap out of Soviet tanks and enemy bases.

But although blowing things up is cool, the action becomes very repetitive very quickly, and this isn't helped by the fact that the only backdrop throughout the whole game is a big blue sea. So unless you're a flying game fanatic, use your £34.99 to do something truly exciting, like buying a crate full of party poppers and a pair of racing pigeons – or something.

4

Falling into mindless oblivion



You can ride the roller coaster for secret treats

The characters look just like they do in the movie

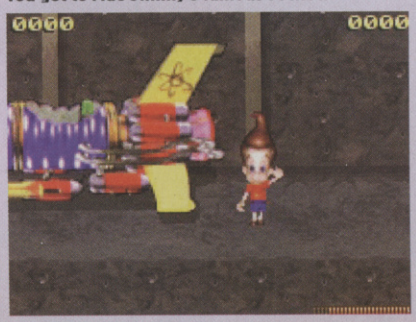
JIMMY NEUTRON: BOY GENIUS

COST: **£34.99** PLAYERS: **1-4** OUT: **NOW** DEVELOPER: **HUMAN SOFT** PUBLISHER: **THQ**

The terror of turning on any new handheld platform game based on a big cartoon licence grows with each new unoriginal, adventure that lands on our desks. So it's a sweet surprise to discover that Jimmy Neutron is genuinely entertaining and retains much of the movie's quirky charm.

Jimmy Neutron on GBA is a simple and colourful platform

You get to ride Jimmy's famous rocket!



You can even go bareback camel riding in the theme park

collect 'em up. Explore each of the game's main hub areas to find action stages that conceal a specific amount of items you need to find. It's simple, but it works well. Jimmy and Goddard have got cool moves, like rope swinging, jet packs and laser-guns, to help them grab all the items.

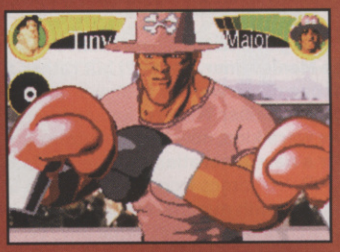
Every few levels you get an into-the-screen driving or flying section that helps keep things exciting, and there are multiplayer options too. It's a great game, but the magic is spoiled slightly by the dark visuals, especially in the sewer and cavern levels. There's no battery save either, meaning you have to input a complex password to continue your game.

7

AND THE REST

Also out this month on Game Boy Advance

GAME: **BOXING FEVER**
FORMAT: **GBA**
PRICE: **£34.99**

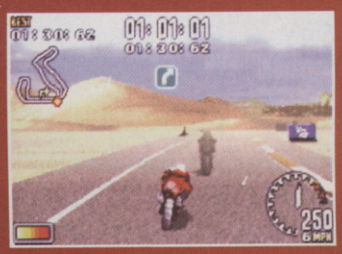


The Major's one tough hombre

Fantastic graphics and stylish animation can't mask a flawed game concept. This first-person boxing game is a great idea but the controls are just too sloppy and very little skill is actually needed to progress through the ranks. Let down by poor execution.

4

GAME: **MOTOGP**
FORMAT: **GBA**
PRICE: **£34.99**



The handling of the bikes is too wooden

More style over substance in a pretty racer with core gameplay that doesn't do anything that Pole Position didn't 20 years ago. The racing action is adequate and there are lots of play modes but it's not 3D so feels horribly dated.

5

GAME: **ESPN BASS TOURNAMENT**
FORMAT: **GBA**
PRICE: **£34.99**

Actual fishing is more fun than this

Fancy presentation and funky soundtrack aside, this fishing sim fails to recreate the 'thrill' of the sport. Catch fish by hammering the A-button at the right pace for the lure you've selected. It's not much fun, it's expensive, and you don't even get to eat the fish you catch. Poo.

4

MANIC MINER

PLAYERS: **1** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **JESTER** PUBLISHER: **JESTER**

Not a game about a hyperactive child (that'd be Manic Minor, geddit?) but rather a remake of one of the world's first ever platform games. Miner Willy rocked our world when we were kids, now he wants to do the same for a new generation of gameheads.

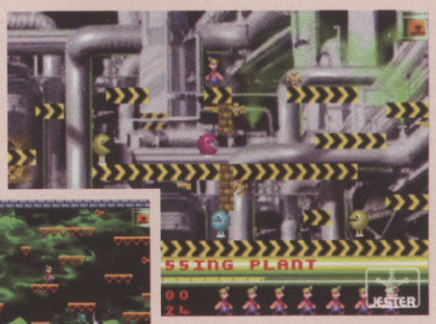
Retro games from years ago can be located with minimal effort with a quick search of the internet. What any revised version of such classics needs to do is offer something more than you can already get for free through your PC.

We've played Manic Miner on GBA and it's surprising how enjoyable this creaky old platformer still is. Ten new levels have been programmed in to the game, and there are new static backgrounds to make it look a bit prettier, but we wonder if it'll be enough to justify the price tag. Our preview game didn't have a save function either, though we're told developer Jester is looking into it.

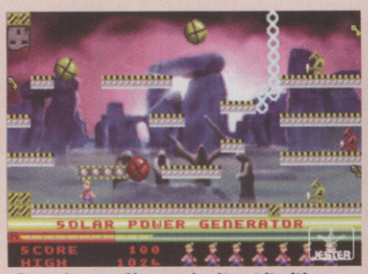
Manic Miner is tough and frustrating, so without any way of saving your progress it would be a waste of £35. Wait for our review.

Collect all items on each screen and make it to the exit to win

Seal tricks – but *why*?!



We reckon some of the new backgrounds work better than others



Stonehenge. No, we don't get it either

Les approves of the death-themed backdrop. There's a surprise

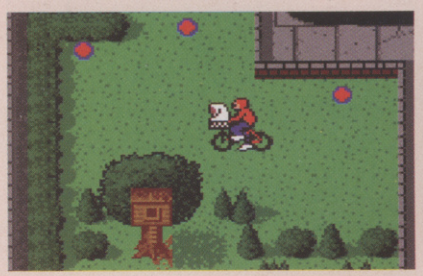
Telephonic terror on your GBA – mama!

ET THE EXTRA TERRESTRIAL

PLAYERS: **1** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **FLUID STUDIOS** PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**

Get the tissues to hand. ET The Extra Terrestrial is being re-released in the cinema and there won't be a dry eye in the house. But let's hope the Game Boy Color and Advance games make us smile instead.

Relive all the classic bits from the movie


Ride with ET in your girlie front basket!

The games promise to follow the plot of the film as closely as possible, with locations lifted right out of the movie, like the forest, Elliot's house and the landing site. There are enemies in there in the form of nasty scientists out to catch ET and conduct research on him, and the GBA version will also feature famous ET speech samples. Sounds like it could 'be good'. A ha ha.

ICE AGE

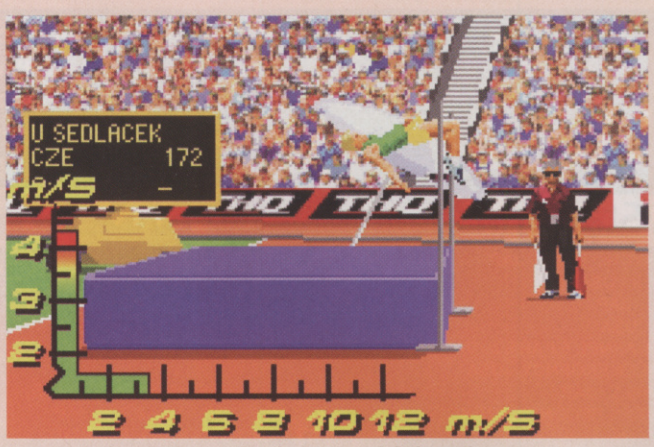
PLAYERS: **1** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **A2M** PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**

Shoot your nuts at the enemy! Well it works for us

Another blockbuster animated movie, another cute Game Boy Advance platformer. With any luck though, Ice Age will follow in Jimmy Neutron's genius footprints (reviewed this issue) and be every bit as enjoyable as the movie.

The plot of the game follows the movie and sees a gang of four misfit creatures

Hammer the buttons then do a quick 'up-down' Dpad flip to jump



Jumping looks mint but getting the buttons right is a pain

FILA DECATHLON

PLAYERS: **1-4** OUT: **APRIL**
DEVELOPER: **ATHLETIC DESIGN** PUBLISHER: **THQ**

We're big fans of playing pocket athletics here at CVG, and can often be found having a sneaky tweak under our desks while pretending to write our reviews. THQ also likes its pocket-related fun, and has teamed up with sports brand Fila to bring you Fila Decathlon. Ten events, digitised speech and some of the craziest controls to ever grace a sports game are poised on the starting blocks.

Standard button-mashing events still rock our kasbah

Fancy footwork as well as brute strength are needed for the Shot Put

Keep an eye on the complex gauges to master each event

We had fun with our preview version, even though the multiplayer isn't in there yet. Fila's got enough events and the smart looks to please athletics fans but one potential problem lies in the button sequences, which are often illogical and fiddly. It's likely that to get the best from multiplayer games, everyone will need to be familiar with the events beforehand, which could dampen the instant thrills many will be seeking.

Look closely, there's a child on the mammoth

Er, wasn't the ice age supposed to be cold?

Take care of the kid

adventuring through a whole bunch of prehistoric glacial landscapes. Each of the four furry freaks has a unique skill and to progress through the levels you'll need to use your animals wisely.

It may not be that original but it's certainly got potential, and the graphics look great.

MUPPET PINBALL

PLAYERS: **1** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **DIGITAL ECLIPSE** PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**

Videogaming used to be all about bagging points and hi-scores, not epic quests and proper stories. Back then, most points-hungry players needed to look no further than their local arcade's pinball tables for the ultimate in hi-scoring fame.

But now arcades are a dying breed, and the way of the shiny steel pinball is in danger of becoming lost in the mists of gaming's yesteryear. But never fear, for you can find out what all the pinballing fuss was about with Muppet Pinball, from the same team responsible for bringing the retro favourites Pinball Dreams and Fantasies to your GBA. As long as the ball physics are spot on, this should be Muppet-tastic.

We hope the Kermit table features frogspawn

The tables look like they'll be rammed with detail

Another World

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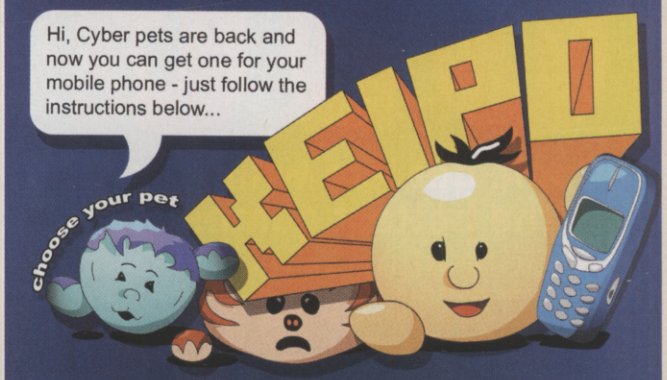

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CVG Trailb

Come get 'em while they're hot! CVG cooks up another fine batch of the hottest games around, and chucks in a couple of PS2s too.

START HERE

No, this isn't an April fool's joke! One of these awesome prizes can be yours for less than the cost of a Mars bar. Feast your eyes on the wealth of treasures CVG is dishing out this month, then do the sane thing and grab a pen, a pair of scissors, an envelope and a stamp. Next do the following: think, write, cut, lick, post. It's that easy!

Win and you could be storming the beaches of Normandy in Medal Of Honor, trashing the streets of Hong Kong in Wreckless, entering the beautiful universe of Golden Sun, or herding Bleeps on your new PS2. If you decide not to enter, we suggest you get your head checked.

7th AKIRA DVD

COURTESY OF **MANGA**

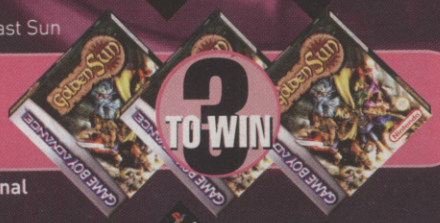
Enjoy animated futuristic apocalyptic nightmares? Then look no further, because this is Japanimation at its finest, ladies and germs: dark, twisted, and totally thrilling. A modern classic in fact.

Q. Which of these is the title of another classic Manga movie?

A. Fist Of The North Star **B.** Palm Of The West Moon **C.** Finger Of The South Planet **D.** Toe Of The East Sun

6th GOLDEN SUN

COURTESY OF **NINTENDO**



2002 is already proving a great year for GBA owners. First Advance Wars, and now the phenomenal RPG masterpiece Golden Sun. Nintendo, with these games you are really spoiling us.

Q. Which famous Nintendo character is going to be cel-shaded for his next adventure on GameCube?

A. Chain **B.** Link **C.** Padlock **D.** Safe

5th SHADOW HEARTS

COURTESY OF **MIDWAY**

This is no ordinary RPG, which is no surprise considering it was made by some ex-Squaresoft guys.

Q. Who developed this deliciously dark RPG?

A. Sackcloth **B.** Sasquatch **C.** Sacnoth **D.** Slackbot

4th SONIC ADVANCE

COURTESY OF **INFOGRAMES**

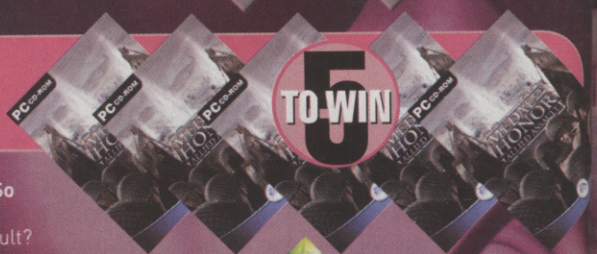
He might well be getting on in years, but the little boy blue still hits super-sonic speeds. So get your entry form in now for a chance to win Sonic Advance for your GBA. Do it!

Q. What is Sonic famous for collecting on his speedy adventures?

A. Sparkling Diamonds **B.** Ruby Gems **C.** Silver Coins **D.** Gold Rings

3rd MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

COURTESY OF **EA**



Sod Saving Private Ryan, this first-person phenomenon is the closest you're ever going to come to experiencing the hardcore action of World War II in a videogame. So win the game, then win the war.

Q. Which Hollywood legend apparently directed the Omaha Beach level in Allied Assault?

A. Martin Scorsese **B.** Steven Spielberg **C.** James Cameron **D.** Oliver Stone

2nd WRECKLESS

COURTESY OF **ACTIVISION**

Hong Kong's got a new form of law enforcement, and it involves leathering an array of vehicles around heaving metropolis streets and smashing the crap out of enemy cars till they explode. Cool.

Q. Which of these *can't* you use to trash the streets of Hong Kong?

A. A tank **B.** A monster truck **C.** A snow plough **D.** A security van

lazer!

FINISH HERE

GERDY GIVEAWAY

2 TO WIN

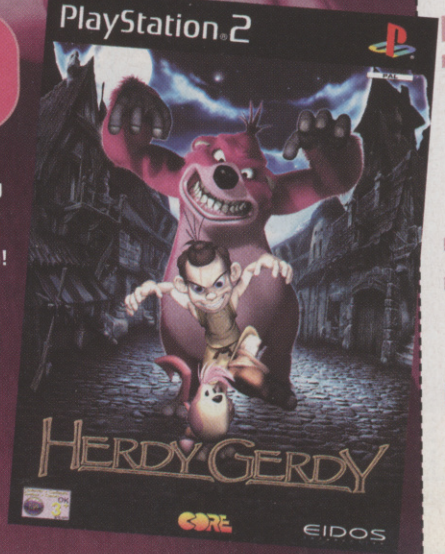
PS2 & HERDY GERDY

COURTESY OF **EIDOS**

Whether you're rounding up Doops with a stick, or herding Bleeps with a flute, the cutesy brain-twisting action of Herdy Gerdy is not to be missed. And CVG is giving you a chance to bag a PS2 with a copy of the game, so where's your excuse not to enter now? Huh!

Q. What are the pink bear-like things called?

A. Glooters
B. Gromps
C. Grimps
D. Grumps



GO ON- WIN IT

Fill in this coupon, tick the correct answers and send it to:

I Want To Be A CVGillionaire! 241, Computer And Video Games, 30 Cleveland St, London, W1T 4JD

Akira
Tick the correct answer:
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐ D.☐

Golden Sun
Tick the correct answer:
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐ D.☐

Shadow Hearts
Tick the correct answer:
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐ D.☐

Sonic Advance
Tick the correct answer:
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐ D.☐

Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault
Tick the correct answer:
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐ D.☐

Wreckless
Tick the correct answer:
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐ D.☐

PS2 & Herdy Gerdy
Tick the correct answer:
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐ D.☐

Enter your details below

Name:

Age:

Address:

Postcode:

Email Address:

Terms and conditions: Only entries with all of the questions completed and received before **April 11** will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post, so don't call, eh? No cash alternatives. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. And when it comes to deciding, nobody decides like 'Decisive Al'. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.

HUNTER'S BACKSIDE!

Sonic's Stunt Double 'Shame'

He's only an actor

A stuntman today

New evidence has been uncovered proving Sonic The Hedgehog CONS fans by using a stunt double and sophisticated computer techniques to enhance his performance.

Despite his membership of the erinaceidae family of Europe, Africa and Asia, and the protection afforded by dense erectile spines on his back, the blue-painted omnivorous mammal, famed for his ability to travel at high speeds, leap gaps and rebound from obstacles:

- **SOMETIMES** lets an otter do the hard work
- **OFTEN** sits smoking and swigging lager from a bottle
- **FREQUENTLY** uses advanced 'computer graphics' to make himself look faster
- **IS NOT** really blue
- **HATES** Knuckles

"For years Sonic fans have had the wool pulled over their eyes," said Geoff Right of Spend Right games. "He's just a normal-coloured hedgehog hiding behind an army of stuntmen and computer graphics experts." Mr The Hedgehog was unavailable for comment.

Queues like this will doubtless be forming in March at auditions in London, Manchester and Birmingham

'Game Icon' Auditions To Be Held

New show set for success

Nationwide TV auditions to find the next star of videogames are to be held in the coming months.

'Game Icon' is expected to attract thousands of hopefuls, including small tradesmen, furry animals, lizards, ex-CIA agents, rogue undercover operatives, rally drivers, dolphins, dragons, skateboarders and Ray-Man.

Contestants will be asked to dodge a fireball, leap from a moving platform, shoot out a security camera from around a wall and repeat a short catchphrase.

Judging will be Steve Thompson, who once thrilled gamers as 'Manic Miner', games heartthrob Lara Croft, and CVG's Alex Simmons, already dubbed 'Angry Alex' by newspapers. "What we're looking for is a character with the X-factor," said Ms Croft.

Auditionees should arrive wearing their own costumes, though orange body paint will be provided.

My Favourite Game Of All Time!

This month: gothic metal star Mortiis

"Judging by my looks and the powerful, occasionally frightening quality of my music, people tend to think I'd be a fan of games such as Devil May Cry and Aliens Vs Predator 2. Well it just goes to show that you can't judge a book by its cover! In fact, my favourite game of all time is Lemmings." Mortiis's album, Smell Of Rain, is out now on Earache records.

Developer Top Thumps

THIS MONTH'S DEVELOPER: Keith Sprong of Global Trottersby Productions

TOP THUMP:
It was a kid at school when we were 13. He said your brother smells of wee and I said no he doesn't, and he said yes he does. So I thumped him. **2/10**

BOTTOM THUMP:
That was a thump I received by accident. My friend Keith was re-enacting the Tyson vs. Lennox punch-up and BOK! He caught me right on the nose. **2/10**

FANTASY THUMP:
Jeez, I'd like to thump Iain Lee, the guy off Thumb Bandits. He said Rodeo Racer V was "shoddy, cruddy, skanky and fit only for games cretins". **2/10**

I WISH I HADN'T THUMP:
Well, I kind of wished I didn't thump the kid who said my brother smells of wee. He sorta beat me to a pulp after that and I had to have an EEG. **2/10**

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"Inside is okay, but the outside is cool!"

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- SWIM WITH DOLPHINS!

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Before going outside, ask the advice of a doctor or pharmacist. Increased exposure to the outside can lead to homelessness and/or alcoholism, depression, suicide and the lamentation of women.

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